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the Annotated Popular Edition of

TAMBURLAINE the GREAT
PART ONE

by Christopher Marlowe

Written c. 1586-87

Earliest Extant Edition: 1590

Featuring complete and easy-to-read annotations.

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TAMBURLAINE THE GREAT

Part the First

By Christopher Marlowe

Written c. 1586-7
First Published 1590

DRAMATIS PERSONAE.

Tamburlaine, a Scythian Shepherd.
Techelles, his follower.
Usumcasane, his follower.

The Persian Royal Family:
Mycetes, King of Persia.
Cosroe, his Brother.

Persian Lords and Captains:
Ortygius.
Ceneus.
Menaphon.
Meander.
Theridamas.

Other Nations' Leaders:
Bajazeth, Emperor of the Turks.
Zabina, Wife of Bajazeth.
Ebea, her Maid.
Alcidamas, King of Arabia, betrothed to Zenocrate.
King of Fess.
King of Morocco.
King of Argier.
Soldan of Egypt.
Zenocrate, Daughter of the Soldan of Egypt.
Anippe, her Maid.
Capolin, an Egyptian Captain.
Governor of Damascus.

Median Lords:
Agydas.
Magnetes.

Philemus, a Messenger.
Virgins of Damascus.
Messengers, Soldiers, etc.

INTRODUCTION to the PLAY

Christopher Marlowe's play, *Tamburlaine the Great, Part One*, was the explosion that ignited the fabulous era of Elizabethan drama. The story is simple: a shepherd-turned-warrior meets and defeats every army he challenges, and in the process builds an enormous, if short-lived, empire. Tamburlaine's success is achieved with a streak of cruelty matching those of the worst villains in history. In addition, the play's strict iambic pentameter is mesmerizing, allowing you to race through speeches at a pace that will leave you breathless.

OUR PLAY'S SOURCE

The text of the play is taken from the *Mermaid* edition of the plays of Christopher Marlowe, edited by Havelock Ellis, and cited in the footnotes below at #7, with some original wording and spelling reinstated from the octavo of 1590.

NOTES ON THE ANNOTATIONS

Mention in the annotations of various editors (citation #3-7, 9, and 12-15 below) refers to the notes supplied by these scholars for their editions of this play. We note that Bartlett's work (#11) is a history text.

The most commonly cited sources are listed in the footnotes immediately below. The complete list of footnotes appears at the end of this play.

Footnotes in the text correspond as follows:

1. *Oxford English Dictionary* (OED) online.
2. Crystal, David and Ben. *Shakespeare's Words*. London; New York: Penguin, 2002.
3. Cunningham, Lt. Col. Francis. *The Works of Christopher Marlowe*. London: Chatto and Windus, 1879.
4. Collier, John Payne. *The History of English Dramatic Poetry*. London: George Bell and Sons, 1879.
5. Dyce, Alexander. *The Works of Christopher Marlowe*. London: George Routledge and Sons, 1876.
6. Schelling, Felix E. *Christopher Marlowe*. New York:

American Book Company, 1912.

7. Ellis, Havelock, ed. *The Best Plays of the Old Dramatists: Christopher Marlowe*. London: Viztelly & Co., 1887.

9. Ribner, Irving. *The Complete Plays of Christopher Marlowe*. New York: The Odyssey Press, 1963.

11. Bartlett, W.B. *The Mongols, From Genghis Kahn to Tamerlane*. Gloucestershire: Amberley Publishing, 2009.

12. Bevington, David, and Rasmussen, Eric. *Doctor Faustus and Other Plays*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995.

13. Wolff, Tatiana A. *Tamburlaine the Great, Parts I and II*. London: Methuen & Co. LTD, 1964.

14. Jump, John D. *Tamburlaine the Great, Parts I and II*. Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 1967.

15. Dawson, Anthony B. *Tamburlaine the Great, Parts One and Two*. London: Bloomsbury Methuen Drama, 1971.

NOTES on TAMBURLAINE and this EDITION.

A. The Real Tamburlaine.

The original Tamburlaine's real name was **Timur**. He was **born in 1336** in Kesh, the modern city of **Shahrisabz** in the modern country of **Uzbekistan**, in the region of Asia known as Transoxiana.

Timur's father was the head of a clan known as the **Berlas**, which seems to have converted to Islam in the years prior to Timur's birth. Given a typical tribal leader's education - lots of outdoor exercise - Timur began his military career by leading regiment-sized cavalry and conquering neighboring tribes. By 1369, his father having died and his brother assassinated, Timur was proclaimed sovereign.

Timur spent the 1370's consolidating his rule east of the Caspian Sea. In the 1380's and 1390's he broke the back of the **Golden Horde**, the Mongol faction that ruled Russia, and conquered **Persia**. During this period, Timur's international reputation for cruelty reached its zenith, as he was known to destroy any city that failed to submit to, or rebelled against, him, and slaughter all of its inhabitants.

In 1398, Timur turned his attention east, crossing the Indus River, easily winning another battle and sacking **Delhi**.

Timur's last campaign - he was now well into his sixties - was comprised of an invasion of **Anatolia** and **Syria**. He destroyed **Damascus** and many other cities in the Levant, as well as Baghdad, before routing the **Ottoman army** at the Battle of Angora (modern Ankara) in 1402, capturing the Ottoman **Sultan Bayezid I** in the process.

While planning his next campaign, into China, Timur **died on 17 February 1405**, at Otrar in modern Kazakhstan. He had built an empire covering an area greater than that of all of western and central Europe combined.

Timur ranks with Attila the Great and Genghis Kahn as one of the most destructive ravagers of civilization and exterminators of human beings in history. While all demographic statistics regarding the ancient world can only be educated guesses at best, it has been estimated that **7-20 million people died** due to his wars.³⁰

In the modern city of Samarkand in Uzbekistan stands the **Gur Emir**, a magnificent mausoleum in which Timur and his descendants are entombed.

Information in this note was adapted from an article in the *Encyclopedia Britannica* of 1911.

B. Why the Name Tamburlaine?

By tradition, Timur was said to have been significantly disabled, owning a withered right arm (or he may have simply lost two fingers) and a crippled right leg, thanks to injuries received in a skirmish in his youth. In Turkish he was known as **Timur I Leng** - Timur the Lame - which was corrupted into the modern **Tamerlane**, or Tamburlaine (Bartlett, pp. 236-7).¹¹

We may note that Timur was referred to as "the lame" only by his enemies, and not his friends.

In 1941, Russian archeologists opened Timur's tomb, confirming the existence of his injuries.³¹ That Timur was able to successfully command armies and rule nations for almost half a century with these physical impairments makes him all the more astonishing, if not particularly admirable.

C. Why Marlowe's History is Mostly Wrong.

What are considered the more reliable biographies of Timur were not yet available in the west when Christopher Marlowe wrote his play.

So what were Marlowe's sources?

(1) Marlowe's primary source was a major Spanish work, *Sylva de varia Lecion*, by Pedro Mexia. The book was translated into English in 1571 as *The Foreste, or a Collection of Histories*, by Thomas Fortescue. Part II, chapter 14, tells the history of "*the renowned and greate Tamberlaine*". Apparently Mexio himself complained about the fragmentary nature of his own sources, "*scarce lendying you any shewe of his conquirous exploytes, the same only confusely, and without any order*".

(2) A work by the Italian Pietro Perondini, *Magni Tamerlanis Scytharvm Imperatoris Vita (The Life of Tamerlane the Great Scythian Emperor)* provided Marlowe with additional details.

Information in this note was adapted from Leslie Spence's article in *Modern Philology, The Influence of Marlowe's Sources on "Tamburlaine I"* (1926).³²

D. A Dull But Important Note on Marlowe's Geography in Tamburlaine, Part One.

In this note we will briefly describe the geography of western Asia as it really was in the late 14th century, the period of time during which Timur was beginning to expand his empire; comments about Marlowe's accuracy (or lack thereof) are also included.

(1) **ASIA MINOR:** Starting in the far west, **Asia Minor** was under the control of the **Ottoman Turks**, who were in the very slow process of appropriating the territory of the entire Byzantine Empire for themselves. In fact, they had already taken over land on the European side of the Bosphorus, leaving the Byzantines with little outside of Constantinople itself.

Marlowe's Ottomans are correctly placed in Anatolia, although at one point he seems to situate the Turkish army at some vague point between Persia and Syria.

(2) **SYRIA AND EGYPT:** **Syria** was under the rule of the Egyptians, as it had been for centuries. **Egypt** itself was led by a Sultan.

Marlowe is correct regarding the big picture here; however, Tamburlaine is portrayed as falling in love with (and eventually marrying) the Egyptian Sultan's daughter; the real Sultan at the time was only about 14 years old at the time Timur invaded the Levant, hardly old enough to have a fully-grown daughter.

(3) **PERSIA:** Bordering Syria to the East was the land historically known as **Persia**, encompassing roughly what today are the northern part of Iraq and all of Iran. Persia until recently had been ruled as an independent empire, known as the **Ilkhanate**, by a sub-group of **Mongols** whose leader was titled "**Ilkahn**". However, this empire had broken up by 1340, and Persia was split into numerous petty kingdoms - which had no chance against the powerful armies of Timur.

Marlowe portrays the Persian Empire as whole and governed by a king, with a ruling class probably intended to be ethnic Persians, rather than Mongols; the characters themselves look back on ancient Persian rulers such as Cyrus the Great as their heroes.

(4) **NORTH ASIA:** Governing the lands **north of the Black and Caspian Seas**, and thus comprising much of modern western Russia, was another group of Mongols, who have come down to us by the name of the **Golden Horde**.

Marlowe ignores the existence of the Golden Horde, and imagines the vast region north of Persia as still belonging to the ancient and still-vaguely understood people known to history as the **Scythians**. Marlowe portrays Tamburlaine as coming from this area, and thus not necessarily of Mongol stock, as he was.

E. Further Fiction Regarding Timur in *Part One*.

In Marlowe's play, Tamburlaine is still in the prime of his life as he takes on the Egyptians and Ottomans, when in reality he was well into his sixties at the time.

Marlowe's Tamburlaine also falls in love with and marries but one woman; the real Timur married many women, and fathered numerous children by them.

F. Marlowe's Cartological Source: the Ortelius Maps.

Commentators have long recognized that Marlowe, while writing the *Tamburlaine* plays, had at his disposal the maps of the great 16th century geographer, Antwerp native Abraham Ortelius (1527-1598). Ortelius had published his *Theatrum Orbis Terrarum*, the world's first atlas, containing 53 maps of the world, in 1570. Three years later, a supplementary work was released containing an additional 17 maps. The maps were generally not original with Ortelius, and he properly gave credit where it was due.

The maps are colourful and detailed, and quite beautiful, if somewhat fanciful and even joyously inaccurate.

Marlowe borrowed exotic sounding place names extensively from the maps as he wrote the *Tamburlaine* plays, especially for *Part Two*. Our annotations will regularly note where the many locations (most of which have no connection to any modern place names) mentioned in the plays appear on the Ortelius maps, and you may even wish to consult reproductions of the maps on the internet as you read the plays.

G. Scene Breaks, Settings, and Stage Directions.

Tamburlaine the Great, Part I was originally published in 1590 in combination with *Tamburlaine, Part II* in a single octavo; it was

reprinted in 1592 and 1597, with further editions released in the first decade of the 17th century. As usual, we lean towards adhering to the wording of the earliest volume as much as possible.

Words or syllables which have been added to the original text to clarify the sense or repair the meter are surrounded by hard brackets []; these additions usually are adopted from the play's later editions. A director who wishes to remain truer to the original text may of course choose to omit any of the supplementary wording.

The 1590 octavo divides our edition of *Tamburlaine* into Acts and Scenes. However, as is the usual case, it does not provide scene settings or identify *asides*. We adopt the scene settings suggested by Dyce and Ellis, and the *asides* by Dyce.

Finally, as is our normal practice, a good number of the octavo's stage directions have been modified, and others added, usually without comment, to give clarity to the action. Most of these changes are adopted from Dyce.

TAMBURLAINE THE GREAT

Part the First

By Christopher Marlowe

Written c. 1586-7
First Published 1590

THE PROLOGUE.

1 From jigging veins of rhyming mother wits,
2 And such conceits as clownage keeps in pay,

4 We'll lead you to the stately tent of war,
Where you shall hear the Scythian Tamburlaine
Threatening the world with high astounding terms,

6 And scourging kingdoms with his conquering sword.

8 View but his picture in this tragic glass,
And then applaud his fortune as you please.

END OF PROLOGUE.

Editor's Suggestion: to get the best sense of the Prologue, we suggest you read it one time through without peeking at the notes, then read the annotation at the end of the Prologue (line 8), then read the Prologue again!

1-2: "Away from the frivolous verse-making of those writers with natural wit and a bent for rhyming, and similar ideas (*conceits*) that keep those engaged in such buffoonery (*clownage*) employed".

jigging = Schelling⁶ suggests "the making of merry or satirical verses."

mother wits = those with native wit or intellect, likely meant ironically.¹

= language.

6: Marlowe deliberately creates an analogy between his hero Tamburlaine and the 5th century A.D. conqueror Attila the Hun, the original *Scourge of God*.

= looking glass or magic mirror.¹

1-8: **The Prologue:** the Prologue of *Tamburlaine the Great* has been interpreted by early editors as Marlowe's call to arms against both the use of rhyming in drama, and the employment of drama to expound on low-bred themes and characters. Marlowe could not have imagined the degree to which his exhortation would succeed.

ACT I.

SCENE I.

[Persia.]

*Enter Mycetes, Cosroe, Meander, Theridamas,
Ortygius, Ceneus, Menaphon, with others.*

1 **Myc.** Brother Cosroe, I find myself aggrieved,

2 Yet insufficient to express the same;
3 For it requires a great and thundering speech:
4 Good brother, tell the cause unto my lords;
5 I know you have a better wit than I.

6 **Cos.** Unhappy Persia, that in former age
7 Hast been the seat of mighty conquerors,
8 That, in their prowess and their policies,
9 Have triumphed over Afric and the bounds

10
11 Of Europe, where the sun dares scarce appear
12 For freezing meteors and congealèd cold,

13
14 Now to be ruled and governed by a man
15 At whose birthday Cynthia with Saturn joined,
16 And Jove, the Sun, and Mercury denied
To shed their influence in his fickle brain!

Scene Settings: please note, settings are not included in any of the referenced editions of *Tamburlaine the Great*; all scene settings in this edition are the editor's own suggestions - as always, done with the goal of making the play easier for the reader to follow.

Entering Characters: *Mycetes* is the King of Persia; *Cosroe* is his brother. The remaining gentlemen are all Persian lords and war chiefs.

1: the play opens with the Persian king Mycetes, a weak man, unable to find the words to describe the cause of his anguish. *Cosroe* is pronounced with the stress on the second syllable: *cos-ROE*.

= unable.¹⁴

= ability to speak cleverly.¹

7f: Cosroe ignores his brother's instruction, and instead brazenly complains of Mycetes' unfitnes to rule.

= statesmanship.²

= *Afric* and *Africa* are often used to mean the Levant in this play.

11-12: Cosroe seems ignorant of Europe's climate; but Wolff¹³ suggests the reference here is to the invasion of Eastern Europe by the 6th-5th centuries B.C. Persian King Darius, whose army suffered terribly from the period's cold weather.

dares scarce = "barely dares to". Many editors emend this to *scarce dares*, but a search of the Early English Books Online database shows that *dare(s) scarce* and *scarce dare(s)* appear with equal frequency.

For = due to.

freezing meteors = ie. snow and ice; the term *meteor* could be used as here to describe atmospheric conditions in general.¹

congealed = frozen.¹

14-16: Cosroe conveys the traditional view of astrology, in which the location of the planets at the time of one's birth determines one's fate and personality. When *Cynthia* (the personified Moon) is in conjunction (*joined*) with *Saturn* (that is, located in the same sign of the zodiac) when one is born, the result will be a melancholic temperament.³³ The influence of the moon alone was also believed to produce a fickle temperament, and Saturn a half-witted one.¹⁵

Cosroe rues the fact that different planets were not in position to have a positive influence on Mycetes at his birth. Jupiter (*Jove*) would have made him "*magnanimous...doing*

18 Now Turks and Tartars shake their swords at thee,
Meaning to mangle all thy provinces.

20 **Myc.** Brother, I see your meaning well enough,
And through your planets I perceive you think
22 I am not wise enough to be a king;
But I refer me to my noblemen
24 That know my wit, and can be witnesses.
I might command you to be slain for this: –
26 Meander, might I not?

28 **Meand.** Not for so small a fault, my sovereign lord.

30 **Myc.** I mean it not, but yet I know I might;
Yet live; yea live, Mycetes wills it so.

32 Meander, thou, my faithful counselor,
Declare the cause of my conceivèd grief,
34 Which is, God knows, about that Tamburlaine,
That, like a fox in midst of harvest time,
36 Doth prey upon my flocks of passengers;
And, as I hear, doth mean to pull my plumes:

38 Therefore 'tis good and meet for to be wise.

40 **Meand.** Oft have I heard your majesty complain
Of Tamburlaine, that sturdy Scythian thief,

42 That robs your merchants of Persepolis

Glorious things": the **Sun** would have given him
"incomparable Judgment, of great Majesty and
Statelinesse", and grant him the ability to "speak with
gravity...and with great confidence"; and, **Mercury** would
bestow on him "much elegance in his speech", making him
"sharp and witty".³³
fickle = unreliable.¹

17-18: Cosroe refers to the Ottoman Turks and the Scythian
band (**Tartars**) led by Tamburlaine, both of whom pose a
threat to the peace of Persia (*thee*).¹⁴

Tartars = Ribner⁹ notes that Marlowe uses the term
Tartar interchangeably with **Scythian**.

In writing the *Tamburlaine* plays, Marlowe made
extensive use of a collection of colourful, if generally
inaccurate, maps of the world, gathered by the Antwerp
geographer Abraham Ortelius (1527-1598) and published in
1570. On Ortelius' complete map of the known world, the
area labeled **Tartaria** is an extensive region, about the size of
Europe, located to the north of the Black Sea.

= appeal.

= intelligence.

25: as king, Mycetes holds the lives of all of his subjects
in his hands.

= with four exceptions - *Tamburlaine*, *Menaphon*, *Bajazeth*
and *Capolin* - all the names in the play are pronounced with
the stress on the second syllable; the above four names begin
with a stressed syllable.

= explain.¹

36-37: **flocks of passengers** = ie. travellers (**passengers**)
within Persia; **flocks**, with **plumes** in line 37, brings together
a metaphor of the chickens or other poultry a **fox** (line 35)
might try to snare while the members of the household are
away gathering the harvest.

To **pull one's plumes** also suggests a tearing down of
one's pride.

= fitting.

41: Tamburlaine is portrayed as coming from **Scythia**, an
ancient land vaguely conceived to be situated on the north
side of the Black Sea, though with its northern and eastern
limits undefined. The real Tamburlaine was born and raised
further east, in south-east modern Uzbekistan.

= the capital of the ancient Persian Empire of the 6th-4th
centuries B.C., burned by Alexander the Great in 330. By

Trading by land unto the Western Isles,

44 And in your confines with his lawless train
 Daily commits incivil outrages,
 46 Hoping (misled by dreaming prophecies)
 To reign in Asia, and with barbarous arms
 48 To make himself the monarch of the East;
 But ere he march in Asia, or display
 50 His vagrant ensign in the Persian fields,
 Your grace hath taken order by Theridamas,
 52 Charged with a thousand horse, to apprehend
 And bring him captive to your highness' throne.
 54 *Myc.* Full true thou speak'st, and like thyself, my lord,

56 Whom I may term a Damon for thy love:

Therefore 'tis best, if so it like you all,
 58 To send my thousand horse incontinent
 To apprehend that paltry Scythian. –
 60 How like you this, my honourable lords?
 Is't not a kingly resolution?

62 *Cos.* It cannot choose, because it comes from you.

64 *Myc.* Then hear thy charge, valiant Theridamas,
 66 The chiefest captain of Mycetes' host,
 The hope of Persia, and the very legs
 68 Whereon our state doth lean as on a staff,
 That holds us up, and foils our neighbour foes:

Tamburlaine's time, *Persepolis* no longer existed, having been long surpassed by nearby Istakhr, which itself may have disappeared by the 14th century.⁸

43: *Trading* = the octavo prints *Treading*, universally emended to *Trading*.
the Western Isles = Ribner believes this refers to Britain.

= "within your borders". = entourage.
 = barbarous.⁵

= before.
 = nomadic or itinerant standards or banners.¹ = battlefields.
 = commanded. Note that line 51 is a 12-syllable line, called an *alexandrine*, the first of several in this play.
 = entrusted with.¹ = ie. cavalry.

55: *thou* = as king, Mycetes addresses his subjects as *thou*, signifying his superior rank; the king is in turn addressed using the formal and deferential *you*.
like thyself = "as is worthy of you".¹²

56: *term* = call.
Damon = the names of the two Greeks *Damon* and his pal Pythias were proverbial for true friendship.
 Having been sentenced to death for plotting to kill the tyrant Dionysius, Pythias asked for permission to go home first to settle his affairs. Dionysius assented, but on the condition that another man volunteer to take his place for execution, should Pythias not return. Damon famously offered himself as surety for his friend, shocking the tyrant. Dionysius was even more surprised when Pythias actually returned to spare Damon. Impressed by this display of perfect love between the two men, the tyrant pardoned them both.

= pleases.
 = immediately.⁵

60-61: Mycetes reveals his weakness with these questions; a true leader would have no need to seek validation from his subjects.

resolution = a 5-syllable word here; the *ö* injects an extra syllable, common in Elizabethan verse: *RE-so-LU-shee-on*.

= ie. "choose but to do so", ie. "be otherwise": Cosroe is sarcastic!

= orders.
 = army.

= defeats or frustrates.²

70	Thou shalt be leader of this thousand <u>horse</u> ,	= horsemen, cavalry.
	Whose <u>foaming gall</u> with rage and high disdain	71: foaming gall = the foaming gall could belong to either the cavalymen or Theridamas; foaming suggests extreme wrath on the part of the soldiers, though the word could also apply literally to the horses. gall = refers to a spirit of bitterness, whose supposed source was the secretion, called gall , of the liver.
72	Have sworn the death of wicked Tamburlaine.	71-72: despite Marlowe's admonition in the Prologue against employing rhymes in drama, a rhyming couplet seems to have snuck into the verse. In fact, quite a few rhyming lines, including rhyming triplets, will appear in our play.
	Go <u>frowning</u> forth; but come thou <u>smiling</u> home,	73: ie. in fury. = ie. in victory.
74	As did <u>Sir Paris</u> with <u>the Grecian dame</u> ;	74: a reference to the Trojan prince Paris , who returned from a trip to Sparta in Greece accompanied by Helen (the Grecian dame), the wife of the Spartan king Menelaus, precipitating the Trojan War. Having appropriated the most beautiful woman in the world, it is no wonder that Paris came home smiling (line 73).
	Return with speed – time passeth swift away;	75-76: Mycetes is simply exhorting Theridamas to get going; while the king seems in line 76 to be suggesting he is ill, he means only to point out that human life in general is fragile.
76	<u>Our</u> life is frail, and we may die to-day.	Our = ie. "my"; Mycetes employs the royal "we".
78	Ther. Before the moon renew <u>her borrowed light</u> ,	78: ie. before another month passes. her borrowed light = borrowed because it is reflected from the sun.
	Doubt not, my lord and gracious sovereign,	= crew or gang. ⁵
80	But Tamburlaine and that Tartarian <u>rou</u>	
82	Shall either perish by our warlike hands,	
84	Or plead for mercy at your highness' feet.	84: stout = valiant. thy words are swords = "your words can wound like a weapon", a proverbial notion; words and swords sounded more alike in the 16th century than they do today.
	Myc. Go, <u>stout</u> Theridamas, <u>thy words are swords</u> ,	= technically redundant, though commonly used, collocation; thence alone means "from there".
	And with thy looks thou conquerest all thy foes;	87-90: Wolff notes Mycetes' glee as he thrills in the juxtaposition of snow-white horses coated with bright-red blood.
86	I long to see thee back return <u>from thence</u> ,	89-90: another rhyming couplet.
	That I may view these milk-white steeds of mine	
88	All loaden with the heads of killèd men,	
	And from their knees e'en to their hoofs below	
90	Besmear'd with blood that makes a dainty show.	
92	Ther. Then now, my lord, I humbly take my leave.	
94	Myc. Theridamas, farewell! ten thousand times.	
96	[Exit Theridamas.]	
98	Ah, Menaphon, why stay'st thou thus behind,	98-101: the king wants Menaphon to take his own body of troops and go in support of the cavalry. = press. = fame.
	When other men <u>prease</u> forward to <u>renown</u> ?	

100	Go, Menaphon, go into Scythia; And foot by foot follow Theridamas.	
102		
104	Cos. Nay, <u>pray you</u> let <u>him</u> stay; a greater [task] Fits Menaphon than warring with <u>a thief</u> :	= please. = ie. Menaphon. = ie. Tamburlaine.
	Create him <u>Prorex</u> of [all] <u>Africa</u> ,	105: Prorex = Viceroy or Deputy King. ¹ Africa = ie. the Levant; some editors emend Africa to Assyria , both here and at line 201 below.
106	That he may win the <u>Babylonians'</u> hearts Which will revolt from Persian government,	106-8: Cosroe continues to insult his brother. Babylonia is on the Euphrates in Mesopotamia, having been under Persian rule since the 6th century B.C.
108	Unless they have a wiser king than you.	
110	Myc. "Unless they have a wiser king than you." These are his words; Meander, <u>set them down</u> .	= "write this down", so that Cosroe's insult will not be forgotten!
112		
114	Cos. And add this to them – that all <u>Asiä</u> Laments to see the folly of their king.	= where place names like Asia and Persia are intended to be pronounced with three syllables instead of their normal two (<i>A-si-a</i> vs. <i>A-sia</i>), the final letter will be printed, as here, with an umlaut (¨) above it.
116	Myc. Well, here I swear by this <u>my royal seat</u> , –	= ie. "my throne"; it was common in Elizabethan drama to make vows on inanimate objects.
118	Cos. You may do well to kiss it then.	118: Cosroe, punning, is probably suggesting his brother kiss his own posterior. ¹² The notion of kissing one's backside appears in print as far back as 1575, in the early Elizabethan comedy <i>Gammer Gurton's Needle</i> .
120	Myc. <u>Embossed with silk</u> as best <u>beseems</u> my <u>state</u> ,	120f: Mycetes finishes his sentence begun in line 116, ignoring Cosroe's comment. Embossed with silk = adorned with designs sewn with silk thread to create a raised surface. ¹ beseems = befits. state = status as monarch.
	To be revenged for these contemptuous words. Oh, where is duty and allegiance now? Fled to the Caspian or the Ocean main? What shall I call thee? brother? – no, a foe; Monster of nature! – Shame unto thy <u>stock</u>	= ancestors or family.
122		
124		
126	That dar'st presume <u>thy sovereign for to mock</u> ! Meander, come: I am abused, Meander.	126: the sovereign for to mock = ie. "to mock thy so- vereign"; a typically complex rearrangement of words to make them fit the meter of the line.
128		125-6: note the presence of yet another rhyming couplet. In most of the Elizabethan drama that succeeded Marlowe, a rhyming couplet would generally, and irregularly, only appear as (1) the last two lines of a scene or act, or (2) less frequently, the last two lines spoken by a character to signal the end of his or her part in a particular scene, as here.
	[<i>Exeunt all but Cosroe and Menaphon.</i>]	
130		
132	Men. How now, my lord? What, <u>mated</u> and amazed To hear the king thus threaten <u>like himself</u> !	= "(are you) confused" ⁵ or "rendered helpless". ¹³ = ie. "as he, a king, would be expected to do?"

134 *Cos.* Ah, Menaphon, I pass not for his threats;
The plot is laid by Persian noblemen
136 And captains of the Median garrisons

To crown me Emperor of Asiä:
138 But this it is that doth excruciate
The very substance of my vexèd soul –
140 To see our neighbours that were wont to quake
And tremble at the Persian monarch's name,
142 Now sits and laughs our regiment to scorn;

And that which might resolve me into tears,

144 Men from the farthest equinoctial line
Have swarmed in troops into the Eastern India,
146 Lading their ships with gold and precious stones,
And made their spoils from all our provinces.

148 *Men.* This should entreat your highness to rejoice,
150 Since Fortune gives you opportunity
To gain the title of a conqueror
152 By curing of this maimèd empery.
Afric and Europe bordering on your land,
154 And continent to your dominiöns,

How easily may you, with a mighty host,

156 Pass into Graecia, as did Cyrus once,

And cause them to withdraw their forces home,
158 Lest you subdue the pride of Christendom.

= care not.⁵

= *Media* comprises a large area of north-west Persia, located south of the Caspian Sea. This was the first region conquered by Cyrus the Great on his way to creating the earliest Persian empire in the 6th century B.C.

= torment.¹⁵

= troubled.

= accustomed.

142: *sits and laughs* = lack of agreement between subject and verb was common in Elizabethan literature, and common in this play.

regiment = rule or authority.³

143: "and what really might make me cry".

resolve = old word meaning "dissolve".

144-7: invaders from the far east, probably Mongols, are plundering areas under nominal Persian control along the empire's eastern frontier.

equinoctial line = generally used to mean the equator,¹ so Cosroe seems to be referring to the farthest "point on the equator", or even "longitude", ie. the farthest eastern reaches of Asia. The equator is *equinoctial* because when the sun passes through it (ie. at the equinox), the length of the day and night is equal.

Eastern India = the land east of the Indus River.

On Ortelius' map of the world, *India Orientalis* (ie. Eastern India) encompasses all of south-east Asia, including most of India (the Indus River forms *India Orientalis'* western border), the southern half of China, and every country below it to the coast. The Ilkhanate - ie. the Persian Empire of the 14th century - had at its greatest extent a piece of western modern Pakistan under its control, but did not actually reach Eastern India.

= persuade.¹

= *Fortune* is frequently personified.

= wounded or crippled empire.

= continuous with, connecting to.¹

155-8: Menaphon flatters Cosroe: if he were king, he could begin to reclaim the greatness of the ancient Persian Empire by invading and capturing Asia Minor, as Cyrus the Great did in the 6th century B.C.

156: the editors are split as to whether *Graecia* refers to modern Greece or western Asia Minor, the latter which was historically Greek in population. *Cyrus the Great* never crossed into European Greece during his career.

157-8: ie. "and force any Byzantine forces employed outside of Anatolia to unite therein to prevent the fall of Constan-

tinople, its capital city, to you."

the pride of Christendom = ie. Constantinople.⁹ As a historical matter, most of the Byzantine Empire by this time had been conquered by the Ottoman Turks; Constantinople was more or less all that remained of the empire. Menaphon seems completely ignorant of, or at least unconcerned with, the Ottomans' success in this area.

= noblemen.⁵

= the general population, ie. everybody who is not noble.

175-184: Ceneus describes a common motif in Elizabethan drama: in times of peace, a country's soldiers become soft and undisciplined.

= commanders. = ie. captured in battle.

= ie. "enabled Persia's soldiers to".

= a *crest* is a three-dimensional heraldic device, such as an eagle or fan, worn on the top of one's helmet, usually for ceremonies and tournaments.¹

= lacking.

= prevent.

188-9: a reference to the *Macedonian* Alexander the Great's victories over *King Darius III* that destroyed the Persian Achaemenid Empire around 330 B.C. Alexander's army famously captured Darius' baggage train and even his family at the Battle of Issus in 333 B.C.

It is perhaps incongruous for Ceneus to so breezily use this greatest of Persian historical disasters as a point of comparison.

195: *shall malice* = "who bear malice towards"; *malice* was commonly used as a transitive verb from the mid-16th through the early 17th century.

estate = situation or standing.

160 [Trumpet within.]

162 **Cos.** But, Menaphon, what means this trumpet's sound?

164 **Men.** Behold, my lord, Ortygius and the rest
Bringing the crown to make you Emperor!

166 *Enter Ortygius and Ceneus, with others,*
168 *bearing a crown.*

170 **Orty.** Magnificent and mighty Prince Cosroe,
We, in the name of other Persian states
172 And commons of this mighty monarchy,
Present thee with th' imperial diadem.

174 **Cen.** The warlike soldiers and the gentlemen,

176 That heretofore have filled Persepolis
With Afric captains taken in the field,
178 Whose ransom made them march in coats of gold,
With costly jewèls hanging at their ears,
180 And shining stones upon their lofty crests,

Now living idle in the wallèd towns,
182 Wanting both pay and martial discipline,
Begin in troops to threaten civil war,
184 And openly exclaim against their king:
Therefore, to stay all sudden mutinies,
186 We will invest your highness Emperor,
Whereat the soldiers will conceive more joy
188 Than did the Macedonians at the spoil
Of great Darius and his wealthy host.

190

192 **Cos.** Well, since I see the state of Persia droop
And languish in my brother's government,
I willingly receive th' imperial crown,
194 And vow to wear it for my country's good,
In spite of them shall malice my estate.

196

198 **Orty.** And in assurance of desired success,
We here do crown thee monarch of the East,

<p>200</p> <p>202</p> <p>204</p> <p>206</p> <p>208</p> <p>210</p> <p>212</p> <p>214</p> <p>216</p> <p>218</p> <p>220</p> <p>222</p> <p>224</p> <p>226</p>	<p>Emperor of Asiä and Persiä; Great Lord of <u>Media</u> and <u>Armenia</u>; Duke of Africa and <u>Albania</u>, <u>Mesopotamia</u> and of <u>Parthia</u>,</p> <p>East India and the <u>late-discovered isles</u>;</p> <p>Chief Lord of all the wide, vast <u>Euxine sea</u>, And of the ever-raging Caspian <u>lake</u>.</p> <p>All. Long live Cosroë, mighty Emperor!</p> <p>Cos. And <u>Jove may</u> never let me longer live</p> <p>Than I may seek to <u>gratify</u> your love, And cause the soldiers that thus honour me To triumph over many provinces! By whose desire of discipline in arms I doubt not shortly but to reign sole king, And with the army of Theridamas, (<u>Whither</u> we presently will <u>fly</u>, my lords) To <u>rest</u> secure against my brother's force.</p> <p>Orty. We knew, my lord, before we brought the crown, Intending your <u>investiön</u> so near The residence of your despisèd brother, The lord[s] would not be too <u>exasperate</u> To injure or suppress your worthy title;</p> <p>Or, if they would, there are in readiness Ten thousand horse to carry you from hence, In spite of all suspected enemies.</p>	<p>200: Media is disyllabic here, with the stress on the first syllable; Armenia has its normal four syllables. = a small region between the Black and Caspian Seas.</p> <p>202: Mesopotamia = the land between the Euphrates and Tigris Rivers in modern Iraq. Parthia = while the earlier Parthian Empire comprised much of the same area as did the Persian Empire, Parthia here refers to a smaller district in north-eastern Iran.</p> <p>= Ribner posits an allusion to the recently-discovered Americas or West Indies here (p. 56).⁹ Such a reference would of course be anachronistic to the 14th century Persians. Later Elizabethan dramatists made occasional allusions to the English colonies in the western hemisphere, but these did not come into existence until after Marlowe's time (Jamestown in Virginia in 1607, Plymouth colony in Massachusetts in 1620).</p> <p>= ie. Black Sea. = ie. sea.</p> <p>207: this line, along with four others, appears short or irregular, but all contain the name Cosroe in it: Marlowe likely considers Cosroe to be trisyllabic in these lines (something like <i>cos-RO-eh</i>) which would in each case repair the meter. In these cases, Cosroe will appear as Cosroë.</p> <p>=ie "may Jove"; we may note here the frequent references to Greek and Roman gods and myths made by all the characters of the play; the 19th century editor Havelock Ellis⁷ commented, "<i>Marlowe had very vague ideas respecting the Persian and Mahomedan religions. Tamburlaine often invokes Jove, and seems well versed in the Greek mythology</i>" (p. 11).</p> <p>= satisfy or repay.</p> <p>= to which. = hurry. = stand.</p> <p>= investiture.³</p> <p>222-3: Ortygius expects that Cosroe's usurping of the crown would not enrage (exasperate, used here as an adjective)¹ Mycetes' adherents enough to lead them to quash Cosroe's rebellion.</p> <p>224-6: but just in case, an army is ready to whisk Cosroe away to safety.</p>
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228 **Cos.** I know it well, my lord, and thank you all.
 230 **Orly.** Sound up the trumpets then.
 232 [*Trumpets sound.*]
 234 **All.** God save the King!
 236 [*Exeunt.*]

ACT I, SCENE II.

[*Scythia.*]

*Enter Tamburlaine leading Zenocrate, Techelles,
 Usumcasane, Agydas, Magnetes, Lords,
 and Soldiers, laden with treasure.*

1 **Tamb.** Come, lady, let not this appal your thoughts;
 2 The jewèls and the treasure we have ta'en
 Shall be reserved, and you in better state,

4 Than if you were arrived in Syria,
Even in the circle of your father's arms,

6 The mighty Soldan of Egyptia.

8 **Zeno.** Ah, shepherd! pity my distressed plight,

(If, as thou seem'st, thou art so mean a man,)

10 And seek not to enrich thy followers
 By lawless rapine from a silly maid,
 12 Who travelling with these Median lords
 To Memphis, from my uncle's country of Media,

14 Where all my youth I have been governèd,

234: is there not something charming about the Persians cheering their new sovereign with such an English acclamation?

Scene II: we are in Scythia, the land north of the Black Sea, and home of Tamburlaine.

Entering Characters: *Tamburlaine* is of course our play's hero; at this point he is nothing more than a bandit in charge of a body of 500 marauders. *Techelles* and *Usumcasane* (who is frequently called simply *Casane*) are Tamburlaine's closest friends and commanders.

Agydas and *Magnetes* are lords of Media; they have been accompanying and travelling with *Zenocrate*, the daughter of the Soldan (Sultan) of Egypt; the three of them are now prisoners of Tamburlaine.

= dismay.²

3: *reserved* = ie. kept safe.¹⁴

and you in better state = "and you will be treated with greater honours" (Ribner, p. 56).⁹

= throughout the play, *even* is always pronounced in one syllable, the *v* essentially omitted: *e'en*.

1-6: that Zenocrate and her baggage train of treasures were captured as she was travelling from Media in Persia to return to her father the Soldan of Egypt emphasizes the Persians' characterization of Tamburlaine as nothing more than a common gangster.

= this is the first of several references to Tamburlaine's humble beginnings as a Scythian shepherd. The real Tamburlaine was the son of a local Mongol chieftain in what is now Uzbekistan.

= base or lowly. Note that since she is a princess, Zenocrate uses *thou* to address a man she views as one of much lower status.

= plunder or robbery.¹ = helpless, defenseless.¹

= the ancient capital of Egypt. Note that the line, unusually, has 13 syllables; Dyce suggests it is corrupt.

14: Zenocrate's back-story of being raised (*governed*) in Media was invented by Marlowe for no other reason than to explain her presence in Persia, where she could be taken

	prisoner by Tamburlaine.
Have passed the army of the mighty Turk,	15: Zenocrate's party somehow had to pass through the Turkish army, even though Persia and Syria (which comprised the northern portion of the Egyptian empire at this time) were contiguous. In reality, the Turks were presently engaged in their slow project of subjugating the Byzantine Empire in western Asia Minor and across the Bosphorus into Greece.
16 Bearing his <u>privy signet</u> and <u>his hand</u> To safe conduct us <u>thorough Africa</u> .	16-17: ie. bearing a pass from the Turkish Sultan granting protection as they travel: the document was written personally by the Sultan (<i>his hand</i>) and bears his official seal (<i>privy signet</i>). ¹ <i>thorough</i> = through, a common two-syllable form. <i>Africa</i> = some editors emend this to <i>Assyria</i> .
18 20 Mag. And since we have arrived in Scythia, Besides rich presents from the <u>puissant Cham</u> , 22 We have his highness' letters to command Aid and assistance, if we stand in need.	19-22: the exact sequence of events leading to Zenocrate's capture is not clear: we may reasonably have believed to this point that Zenocrate and her party had been travelling in a straight line west from Persia to Egypt, and were picked up by Tamburlaine during one of his raids and brought back north to Scythia. Magnetes' speech, however, suggests another possibility, namely that the royal party rode north first to visit the leader of the Golden Horde, a Mongol sub-group which was ruling Russia at the time, before turning southwest to go home, and were then taken prisoner as they passed through Scythia. <i>puissant Cham</i> = mighty khan; <i>cham</i> , or khan, is the term used to describe a Mongol leader. In our play's geography, the khan of the Golden Horde would be the only Mongol candidate to which Magnetes could be referring. The areas controlled by the Golden Horde would have overlapped with the region understood to be Scythia north of the Black Sea.
24 Tamb. But now you see these letters and commands Are countermanded by a greater man; 26 And through my provinces you must expect Letters of conduct from <u>my mightiness</u> , 28 If you intend to keep your treasure safe. But, since I love to live <u>at liberty</u> , 30 As easily may you get the Soldan's crown As any <u>prizes</u> out of <u>my precinct</u> ;	24-25: note the wordplay suggested by the repetition of the syllable <i>man</i> in these lines; the effect is one of intensification. = ie. "me". = "as I please", or "unrestrained"; ¹ note the alliteration in the line. = valuables. = areas controlled by Tamburlaine.
32 For they are friends that help to <u>wean</u> my <u>state</u> , "Till men and kingdoms help to strengthen it, 34 And must maintain my life exempt from <u>servitude</u> . – But, tell me, madam, is your grace betrothed? 36 38 Zeno. I am – my lord – <u>for so you do import</u> .	32: the Egyptian's treasure will help support Tamburlaine's rise to power (<i>state</i>). <i>wean</i> = nurture or raise, like a child. ¹ 33: Tamburlaine has clear expectations to grow his still modest empire. = subjection to others, slavery. ¹ = ie. "for so your manner suggests, ie. that you are a lord"; Zenocrate hesitates, uncertain if she should use that title.

40	Tamb. I am a lord, for so my deeds shall prove: And yet a shepherd by my parentage.	= usually a disyllable, as here: <i>HE'N-ly</i> .
42	But, lady, this fair face and <u>heavenly</u> hue Must grace <u>his bed that</u> conquers Asiä,	= ie. "the bed of him who"
44	And means to be a terror to the world, Measuring the limits of his <u>emperey</u>	= empire.
	By east and west, as <u>Phoebus doth his course</u> . –	= Phoebus is another name for Apollo in his guise as the sun god; his course alludes to the path he follows as he pulls the sun across the sky with his team of horses. Tamburlaine means that he expects his empire to grow as large as the area of land the sun shines on in a day.
46	Lie here ye <u>weeds</u> that I disdain to wear!	46: the editors agree that Tamburlaine here removes his shepherd's clothing, either revealing his suit of armour underneath (Dawson) ¹⁵ or donning a suit of armour captured from the Egyptians (Bevington). ¹² weeds = clothes.
48	This complete armour and this <u>curtle-axe</u> Are adjuncts more beseeming Tamburlaine.	47-48: "this full set of armour and this weapon are the only accessories that are fitting for me to wear and employ." curtle-axe = not an axe, but a short, curved sword. ⁷
50	And, madam, whatsoever you <u>esteem</u> Of this <u>success</u> and loss <u>unvaluëd</u> , Both may invest you Empress of the East;	49-51: "and, Zenocrate, whatever you think (esteem) of this event (success , ie. her capture) and the loss of your treasure, these two occurrences might just lead to your becoming my empress." unvalued = invaluable. ⁷
52	And <u>these</u> that seem but <u>silly country swains</u>	52: these = here Tamburlaine indicates Techelles and Usumcasane. silly country swains = lowly or simple country bumpkins or shepherds.
54	May <u>have the</u> leading of so great an <u>host</u> , As with their weight shall make the mountains quake, Even as when <u>windy exhalatiöns</u>	= ie. end up. = army. = a reference to the trapped vapours that were believed since ancient times to be the cause of earthquakes. = joust, as knights at a tournament would do.
56	Fighting for passage, <u>tilt</u> within the earth.	
58	Tech. As princely lions, when they rouse themselves, Stretching their paws, and threatening herds of beasts, So in his armour looketh Tamburlaine.	58-60: Techelles' metaphor, comparing Tamburlaine to a lion rampant, ¹³ is reminiscent of the similar extended similes involving wild beasts employed by Homer in the <i>Iliad</i> and the <i>Odyssey</i> .
62	Methinks I <u>see</u> kings kneeling at his feet, And he with frowning brows and fiery looks, <u>Spurning</u> their crowns from off their captive heads.	= ie. foresee. = kicking.
64	Usum. And making thee and me, Techelles, kings, That even to death will follow Tamburlaine.	
68	Tamb. Nobly <u>resolved</u> , sweet friends and followers! These lords perhaps do <u>scorn our estimates</u> , And think we prattle with <u>distempered</u> spirits;	= determined. = ie. "scorn us because of our reputations (estimates)". ¹ = mad or deranged.
70		

But since they measure our deserts so mean,

72 That in conceit bear empires on our spears,
Affecting thoughts coequal with the clouds,

74 They shall be kept our forcèd followers,
Till with their eyes they view us emperors.

76 **Zeno.** The gods, defenders of the innocent,
78 Will never prosper your intended drifts,

That thus oppress poor friendless passengers.
80 Therefore at least admit us liberty,
Even as thou hopest to be eternized,
82 By living Asia's mighty Emperor.

84 **Agyd.** I hope our ladies' treasure and our own
May serve for ransom to our liberties:
86 Return our mules and empty camels back,
That we may travel into Syria,
88 Where her betrothèd lord Alcidas,
Expects th' arrival of her highness' person.

90

Mag. And wheresoever we repose ourselves,
92 We will report but well of Tamburlaine.

94 **Tamb.** Disdains Zenocrate to live with me?
Or you, my lords, to be my followers?
96 Think you I weigh this treasure more than you?
Not all the gold in India's wealthy arms
98 Shall buy the meanest soldier in my train.
Zenocrate, lovelier than the love of Jove,

100 Brighter than is the silver Rhodope,

Fairer than whitest snow on Scythian hills, –
102 Thy person is more worth to Tamburlaine
Than the possession of the Persian crown,
104 Which gracious stars have promised at my birth.

A hundred Tartars shall attend on thee,
106 Mounted on steeds swifter than Pegasus;

Thy garments shall be made of Median silk,

71: "but since our guests reckon us to be of so little worth".
deserts = deservings.

= "who in our imaginations".

73: "with dreams that reach as high as the clouds".

74-75: Tamburlaine decides not to release Zenocrate and the captive lords until he has reached the pinnacle of his success.

78: **prosper** = interesting but not unknown transitive use.
drifts = plans.
= travellers.

= made famous forever.¹
= ie. becoming.

= ie. "to give us back our freedom."

88: Zenocrate is engaged to the King of Arabia. She had previously mentioned, however, that she spent her entire youth in Media, so we may wonder whether she has ever met her betrothed.

= value.

= lowliest. = retinue.
= ie. Jove's wife Juno; **love** and **Jove** would have rhymed in Elizabethan English.

= the **Rhodopes** are a mountain chain on the border of Thrace and Macedonia; the *Perseus Encyclopedia* mentions the mountains were an ancient source of gold and silver.²⁹

104: first of numerous allusions to the role the arrangement of the stars plays in determining one's fortune and path in life.

= wait.
= the famed winged-horse of Greek myth.

= the citizens of Media were famous for their luxurious dress and living.³⁸
In the 6th century A.D., the secret of silk production was finally learned in the west when two Persian monks who had long lived in China smuggled out the eggs of a silkworm in a hollow cane, and delivered them to the Byzantine emperor

108	<u>Enchased</u> with precious jewèls of mine own, More rich and <u>valurous</u> than Zenocrate's.	Justinian. ⁸ = inlaid or set. ¹ = valuable. ¹
110	With milk-white <u>harts</u> upon an ivory <u>sled</u> , Thou shalt be drawn amidst the frozen <u>pools</u> ,	110-2: the image is one of all-encompassing whiteness: the albino deer (<i>harts</i>), the ivory sleigh (<i>sled</i>), and the snow and ice over which it is pulled. <i>pools</i> = lakes.
112	And scale the icy mountains' lofty tops,	
	Which with thy beauty will be soon <u>resolved</u> .	= melted.
114	<u>My martial prizes</u> with five hundred men,	= "the plunder I will collect".
	Won on the <u>fifty-headed Volga's waves</u> ,	= the <i>Volga</i> is the longest river in Europe, flowing from north-west of Moscow to the Caspian Sea, and hence through Scythia; its <i>fifty-heads</i> allude to its numerous sources. ⁸ Ortelius' map of Asia shows the Volga winding sinuously through Russia, with its numerous tributaries.
116	Shall all we offer to Zenocrate, –	
118	And then myself to fair Zenocrate.	
	Tech. What now! – in love?	
120		
	Tamb. Techelles, women must be flatterèd: But this is she with whom I am in love.	
122		
124	<i>Enter a Soldier.</i>	
126	Sold. News! news!	
128	Tamb. How now – what's the matter?	
130	Sold. A thousand Persian horsemen are at hand, Sent from the king to overcome us all.	130-1: the cavalry division of Theridamas, sent by Mycetes to capture Tamburlaine, is approaching.
132	Tamb. How now, <u>my lords of Egypt</u> , and Zenocrate!	= meaning Agydas and Magnetes; note that line 133 pos- sesses 12 syllables, another <i>alexandrine</i> .
134	How! – must your jewèls be restored again, And I, that triumphed so, be overcome?	
136	How say you, lordings, – is not this your hope?	
138	Agyd. We hope yourself will willingly restore them.	138: Agydas is diplomatic in his response!
140	Tamb. Such hope, such fortune, have the thousand horse.	140: the Persian cavalry entertain the same hope of seeing Tamburlaine destroyed.
	<u>Soft ye</u> , my lords, and sweet Zenocrate! You must be forcèd from me ere you go.	= "be silent", "hurry", or "wait!" ^{1,14} 142: "you will only be able to leave me if I am forced to let you go."
142		
	A thousand horsemen! – We five hundred foot! – An odds too great for us to stand against.	143-4: foot-soldiers are never a match for cavalry - and Tamburlaine's army is outnumbered two-to-one to boot! But Bevington suggests Tamburlaine is ironic.
144		
	But are they rich? – and is their armour good?	
146		
	Sold. Their plumèd <u>helms</u> are <u>wrought</u> with beaten gold, Their swords enamelled, and about their necks Hangs <u>massy</u> chains of gold, down to the waist, In every part exceeding <u>brave</u> and rich.	= ie. helmets. = worked or finished. = massive. = splendidly dressed. ³
148		
150		

152	Tamb. Then shall we fight courageously with them? Or look you I should play the orator?	153: "or would you rather I try to negotiate a peace with them?" Tamburlaine is likely teasing his subordinates.
154	Tech. No: cowards and faint-hearted runaways	
156	Look for orations when the foe is near: Our swords shall play the orator for us.	
158	Usum. Come! let us meet them at the <u>mountain foot</u> ,	= if Usumcasane wants to drive the enemy <i>down the hill</i> (line 161), then <i>mountain foot</i> does not make sense here; Wolff suggests <i>foot</i> here means "foot-hill", but Dyce would emend <i>foot</i> to <i>top</i> .
160	And with a sudden and a hot <u>alarum</u> , Drive all their horses headlong down the hill.	= call to arms or battle, ² but Jump ¹⁴ suggests <i>hot alarum</i> means "sudden assault".
162	Tech. Come, let us march!	
164	Tamb. Stay, Techelles! <u>ask a parley first</u> .	165: Tamburlaine has an idea: he wants to meet Theridamas first before plunging into battle with the Persians. <i>ask a parley first</i> = it was a convention of medieval English warfare for opposing sides to send messengers to each other demanding surrender, or presenting conditions to negotiate away their differences, before offering battle.
166		
	<i>Tamburlaine's Soldiers enter.</i>	
168	Open the <u>mails</u> , yet guard the treasure sure;	= ie. travelling bags or trunks of the captives. ^{3,4}
170	Lay out our golden <u>wedges</u> to the view, That their reflections may amaze the Persians;	= ingots of gold. ¹ During this speech, Tamburlaine's soldiers spread the jewels and precious metals, taken from the luggage of their captives, over the stage.
172	And look we friendly on them when they come; But if they offer word or violence,	
174	We'll fight five hundred men-at-arms to one, Before we part with our possession.	174: "I would fight against odds of 500-to-1".
176	And 'gainst <u>the general</u> we will lift our swords, And either <u>lanch</u> his greedy thirsting throat,	= ie. Theridamas. = pierce. ⁴⁴ often unnecessarily emended to <i>lance</i> .
178	Or take him prisoner, and <u>his chain</u> shall serve For manacles, till he be ransomed home.	= ie. the heavy gold chain worn by Theridamas; see lines 148-9 above.
180		
182	Tech. I hear them come; shall we encounter them?	
184	Tamb. Keep all your <u>standings</u> and not stir a foot, Myself will <u>bide</u> the danger of the <u>brunt</u> .	= places. 184: Tamburlaine will stand at the front of his troops to take the first shock of any charge the Persians might make. <i>bide</i> = face, encounter. ¹ <i>brunt</i> = attack. ¹
186	<i>Enter Theridamas and others.</i>	
188	Ther. Where is this Scythian Tamburlaine?	188: because line 188 is short, and based on Theridamas' referring to a <i>Scythian shepherd</i> at line 193, Dyce suggests emending line 188 by inserting <i>shepherd</i> after <i>Scythian</i> .
190	Tamb. Whom seek'st thou, Persian? – I am Tamburlaine.	
192	Ther. Tamburlaine! –	192ff: note how Tamburlaine and Theridamas are each immediately attracted to the other.
	A Scythian shepherd so embellishèd	193-4: Theridamas is impressed with the riches surrounding

194 With nature's pride and richest furniture!

196 His looks do menace Heaven and dare the gods:
His fiery eyes are fixed upon the earth,

198 As if he now devised some stratagem,
Or meant to pierce Avernus' darksome vaults
200 To pull the triple-headed dog from hell.

202 **Tamb.** Noble and mild this Persian seems to be,
If outward habit judge the inward man.

204 **Tech.** His deep affections make him passionate.

206 **Tamb.** With what a majesty he rears his looks! –
In thee, thou valiant man of Persiä,
208 I see the folly of thy emperor.
Art thou but captain of a thousand horse,

210 That by charácters graven in thy brows,

And by thy martial face and stout aspéct,

212 Deserv'st to have the leading of an host!
Forsake thy king, and do but join with me,
214 And we will triumph over all the world;
I hold the Fates bound fast in iron chains,

216 And with my hand turn Fortune's wheel about:

Tamburlaine, who is supposed to be a mere shepherd.
furniture = accoutrements, ie. armour, equipment, etc.¹

195-9: Wolff observes that Tamburlaine's ambitions extend all the way from Heaven to hell.

Heaven = Heaven will in almost every case be a monosyllable, with the *v* essentially omitted: *Hea'n*.

198-9: ie. "or he intended to break through the boundaries of hell, and capture Cerberus."

The allusion is to Hercules' twelfth labour, in which the hero descended into Hades and wrestled Cerberus, the vicious **three-headed guard-dog** of the underworld, into submission, returning with the monster to the earth's surface.

Avernus is a lake situated at the entrance to Hades, whose vapours are so toxic that birds fall dead if they attempt to fly over it.

202: **habit** = bearing or appearance.

judge = allows one to make a judgment about.¹

Shakespeare borrowed this sentiment for *Pericles, Prince of Tyre*, Act II.iii: "*Opinion's but a fool, that makes us scan / The outward habit by the inward man.*" However, Shakespeare's version seems to confusingly reverse the expected order of the **inward man** and the **outward habit**.

204: "his deep-felt emotions cause him to be agitated or unusually expressive of those feelings."

208-9: ie. Mycetes is foolish for giving such an obviously gifted man as Theridamas command of such a small force.

210: the OED suggests that the **characters** engraved (**graven**) in Theridamas' brow here refers to "indelible quality (*def.* I,1,a); but **characters** can also refer to letters or markings, and, intriguingly, to astrological symbols of the planets: see the next note.

211: **stout** = magnificent or brave.

aspect = there could be, with **characters**, an astrological metaphor here, as **aspect** can, in addition to its modern sense of "countenance" or "appearance", refer to the relative positions of the planets in the heavens.¹

= an army; Tamburlaine is flattering Theridamas.

= **the Fates** were three goddesses who determined the course and length of human lives. Tamburlaine suggests he controls them, rather than the other way around.

= **Fortune** was a goddess who spun a **wheel**, which arbitrarily raised or lowered people's circumstances and states; Tamburlaine presumes to control the wheel.

And sooner shall the sun fall from his sphere,

218 Than Tamburlaine be slain or overcome.
 Draw forth thy sword, thou mighty man-at-arms,
 220 Intending but to raze my charmèd skin,
 And Jove himself will stretch his hand from Heaven
 222 To ward the blow and shield me safe from harm.
 See how he rains down heaps of gold in showers,
 224 As if he meant to give my soldiers pay!
 And as a sure and grounded argument
 226 That I shall be the monarch of the East,
 He sends this Soldan's daughter rich and brave,
 228 To be my Queen and portly emperess.

If thou wilt stay with me, renowmèd man,

230 And lead thy thousand horse with my conduct,
 Besides thy share of this Egyptian prize,
 232 Those thousand horse shall sweat with martial spoil
 Of conquered kingdoms and of cities sacked;
 234 Both we will walk upon the lofty cliffs,

And Christian merchants that with Russian stems

236 Plough up huge furrows in the Caspian sea,
 Shall vail to us, as lords of all the lake.

238 Both we will reign as consuls of the earth,

And mighty kings shall be our senators.

240 Jove sometimes maskèd in a shepherd's weed,

217: Elizabethan drama frequently referenced a Ptolemaic view of the universe, in which the sun, moon, planets and all the stars were encased in distinct concentric spheres that revolved around the earth.

his sphere = ie. its sphere.

= scratch or graze.^{1, 15}

= ie. Jove.

= evidence.²

228: *portly* = majestic.²

emperess = Marlowe employs this alternate spelling of *empress* whenever he wishes it to be pronounced with three syllables.

= renowned, a common alternate spelling. The early editions of the play do not spell *renowmed* / *renowned* consistently one way or the other; our version will follow whatever is found in the earliest octavo in each location.

= ie. "under my leadership or management".¹

= cliffs.

235: the editors cannot agree as to whether the line describes Christian trading ships (*merchants*)³ possessing Russian prows (*stems*), or if *Russian stems* refers to separate Russian trading ships; if the latter interpretation is correct, then *stems* would be a good example of a *synecdoche*, a figure of speech in which a term for a part is used to represent the whole (ie. *stem* for "ship").

= lower their topsails as a sign of respect.³

= Tamburlaine hearkens back to the title given to the two Romans who together ruled Rome each year. His use of this term to apply to both Theridamas and himself is more meaningful than if he had said something like "co-rulers".

= *our senators* continues Tamburlaine's evocation of ancient Rome.

240: Tamburlaine, an actual shepherd, implicitly compares himself to the king of the gods, who once disguised himself as a shepherd.

masked = disguised himself.

weed = outfit.

The allusion is likely to a passage in Book VI of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, in which *Jove*, described as a shepherd, seduced Mnemosine, the goddess of memory; mythology

And by those steps that he hath scaled the Heavens
 242 May we become immortal like the gods.
 Join with me now in this my mean estate,
 244 (I call it mean because being yet obscure,
 The nations far removed admire me not,)
 246 And when my name and honour shall be spread
 As far as Boreas claps his brazen wings,

 Or fair Boötes sends his cheerful light,
 248 Then shalt thou be competitor with me,
 250 And sit with Tamburlaine in all his majesty.
 252 **Ther.** Not Hermes, prolocutor to the gods,

 Could use persuasions more pathetical.
 254
 256 **Tamb.** Nor are Apollo's oracles more true,
 Than thou shalt find my vaunts substantial.

 258 **Tech.** We are his friends, and if the Persian king
 Should offer present dukedoms to our state,

 260 We think it loss to make exchange for that
 We are assured of by our friend's success.
 262
 264 **Usum.** And kingdoms at the least we all expect,
 Besides the honour in assurèd conquests,
 When kings shall crouch unto our conquering swords
 266 And hosts of soldiers stand amazed at us;
 When with their fearful tongues they shall confess,
 268 "These are the men that all the world admires."

 270 **Ther.** What strong enchantments tice my yielding soul!

 Are these resolvèd, noble Scythians?
 272 But shall I prove a traitor to my king?

observes that the pair slept together for nine consecutive nights, resulting in the birth of the nine Muses.

= ie. "yet still humble condition".

= "which are far away".

247: ie. "as far as **Boreas**, the god of the north wind, blows." The line is adapted from Ovid's *Lamentations*: "*and though Boreas roars and thrashes his wings*".^{6,39}

= "the herdsman", a large constellation in the northern sky.⁴⁰
 = partner or associate.⁵

252: **Hermes** (the Roman Mercury) was the messenger god, and the god of eloquence.¹⁵

prolocutor = spokesman.¹

253: "could speak more movingly (*pathetical*)."²

255-6: Tamburlaine's predictions will prove as prescient as were those made by **Apollo's oracle**.

Apollo's oracles = an allusion to the Delphic oracle; the Greek Olympian god **Apollo** was famously known to speak through his priestess (**oracle**) at Delphi in central Greece. For a fee, the oracle would channel the god and answer questions or make predictions, most of which were notoriously ambiguous. Note that the word **oracle** could refer to either the priestess herself or the words the oracle spoke.

vaunts = boasts.

substantial = reliable.¹

= "even if".

259: "should offer to make us dukes".

260-1: ie. "we would come out losers if we took Mycetes up on his offer, in exchange for what we expect to gain by sticking with Tamburlaine."

= bow down to or cringe before.²

= frightened.

= entice.

271: ie. "is it possible that Scythians can be so determined and noble?"¹²

Line 271 has been the victim of a lot of emending. Many editors reverse **Are these** to **These are**, turning the question into an assertion. Dyce combines line 270-1 into a single sentence, removing the punctuation at the end of line 270, emending **Are these** in line 271 to **to these**, and changing the question mark at the end of line 271 into an exclamation point.

274 **Tamb.** No, but the trusty friend of Tamburlaine.

276 **Ther.** Won with thy words, and conquered with thy looks,
 278 I yield myself, my men, and horse to thee,
 280 To be partaker of thy good or ill,
 282 As long as life maintains Theridamas.

280 **Tamb.** Theridamas, my friend, take here my hand,
 282 Which is as much as if I swore by Heaven,
 284 And called the gods to witness of my vow.
 284 Thus shall my heart be still combined with thine
 Until our bodies turn to elements,

286 And both our souls aspire celestial thrones. –
 Techelles and Casane, welcome him!

288 **Tech.** Welcome, renownèd Persian, to us all!

290 **Usum.** Long may Theridamas remain with us!

292 **Tamb.** These are my friends, in whom I more rejoice
 294 Than doth the King of Persia in his crown,
 And by the love of Pylades and Orestes,

296 Whose statutes we adore in Scythia,

Thyself and them shall never part from me
 298 Before I crown you kings in Asiä. –
 300 Make much of them, gentle Theridamas,
 302 And they will never leave thee till the death.

302 **Ther.** Nor thee nor them, thrice noble Tamburlaine,
Shall want my heart to be with gladness pierced,
 304 To do you honour and security.

306 **Tamb.** A thousand thanks, worthy Theridamas. –
 And now fair madam, and my noble lords,
 308 If you will willingly remain with me
 You shall have honours as your merits be;
 310 Or else you shall be forced with slavery.

312 **Agyd.** We yield unto thee, happy Tamburlaine.

314 **Tamb.** For you then, madam, I am out of doubt.

316 **Zeno.** I must be pleased perforce. Wretched Zenocrate!

= "as good as".

= always.

= ie. decompose into their component parts, which were
 believed to be four *elements*: air, earth, fire and water.
 = mount or soar up to.¹⁴

295: Tamburlaine vows on the mutual affection between
Pylades and Orestes.

Orestes was the son of Agamemnon, the commander of
 the Greek troops during the Trojan War, and his wife
 Clytemnestra. With her husband away at war for ten years,
 Clytemnestra took a new husband, Aegisthus (Agamemnon's
 cousin). Clytemnestra slew Agamemnon upon his return
 from Troy; in vengeance, Orestes killed his mother, and his
 kinsman and best friend *Pylades* murdered Aegisthus
 (Murray, p. 302-3).⁴¹

296: Schelling traces the notion that the Scythians honoured
 Orestes and Pylades to Ovid's *Ex Ponto*, Book III.ii.95-
 96.

statutes = statues, an alternate form.

302: more interesting alliteration in this line.

= "shall find my heart to be lacking".

= ie. "offer you protection".

306: more dramatic alliteration with *th-*, as in line 302.

307-310: Tamburlaine addresses his prisoners.

308-310: note the dramatic triplet.

= fortunate.

= ie. "no longer suspicious".

= ie. without choice; line 316 is another alexandrine.

END OF ACT I.

ACT II.

SCENE I.

[*Persia.*]

*Enter Cosroe, Menaphon, Ortygius, and Ceneus,
with Soldiers.*

1 **Cos.** Thus far are we towards Theridamas,
2 And valiant Tamburlaine, the man of fame,
The man that in the forehead of his fortune
4 Bears figures of renown and miracle.

But tell me, that hast seen him, Menaphon,
6 What stature yields he, and what personage?

8 **Men.** Of stature tall, and straightly fashionèd,
Like his desire lift upwards and divine;
10 So large of limbs, his joints so strongly knit,
Such breadth of shoulders as might mainly bear
12 Old Atlas' burthen; – 'twixt his manly pitch,

A pearl, more worth than all the world, is placed,
14 Wherein by curious sovereignty of art
Are fixed his piercing instruments of sight,
16 Whose fiery circles bear encompassèd
A Heaven of heavenly bodies in their spheres,

18 That guides his steps and actions to the throne,
Where honour sits invested royally:
20 Pale of complexion, wrought in him with passion,
Thirsting with sovereignty and love of arms;
22 His lofty brows in folds do figure death,

Entering Characters: the Persian king's brother *Cosroe* leads his country's highest-ranking nobles and their army northward to Georgia; they are assuming that Theridamas, who has gone on before them, has completed his mission of capturing Tamburlaine.

1: Cosroe speaks these words to let the audience know that the Persian army is on the move.

3-4: the notion that one's destiny is inscribed on one's *forehead* appears in the scripture of Sikhism, and, according to Ribner, in Muslim belief (p. 64).⁹

figures = images;¹ but in astrology, a *figure* is also a diagram of the "state and disposition of the heavens ... marked down in a figure of 12 triangles,"²⁵ hence suggesting "a fate".

Note also the alliteration spanning lines 3-4, as well as the wordplay of *forehead* and *fortune*.

= appearance, demeanor.

= lifted.

= mightily.¹

12: *Old Atlas' burthen* = *Atlas*, son of the Titan god Iapetus, famously held up the heavens on his shoulders.

'twixt = between.

pitch = the points of (Tamburlaine's) shoulders.²⁰

= ie. Tamburlaine's head.

14: "into which, by the most excellent (*sovereign*)² and careful skill (*curious art*)".

15: typical elaborate Elizabethan description of the eyes.

16: Tamburlaine's eyes are compared to or described as possessing the power of the spheres of the universe.

16-17: another reference to the Ptolemaic geocentric model of the universe as a series of revolving spheres containing the planets and stars.

17: *Heaven* is a monosyllable (*Hea'n*) and *heavenly* is a disyllable (*hea'n-ly*).

18: Tamburlaine's eyes, like his auspicious stars, direct his destiny toward kingship.

= worked or finished.

22-23: an angry countenance on the part of Tamburlaine

	And in their smoothness amity and life;	presages (<i>figures</i>) death, but a pleasant one, friendship and life.
24	About them hangs a knot of amber hair, Wrappèd in curls, as fierce <u>Achilles'</u> was,	<i>lofty brows in folds</i> = a lovely expression describing raised brows creating furrows in the forehead, suggesting an excited state.
26	On which the breath of Heaven delights to play, Making it dance with <u>wanton</u> majesty. –	24-25: <i>Achilles</i> was the greatest warrior of the Trojan War; Homer describes him as possessing " <i>fair hair</i> " in the <i>Iliad</i> . ⁴³
28	His arms and fingers, long, and sinewy, <u>Betokening</u> valour and excess of strength; –	= careless, playful, ² unrestrained. ¹³
30	In every part proportioned like the man Should make the world subdued to Tamburlaine.	= evidencing.
32		8-31: despite Menaphon's impressive description of Tamburlaine's physique, the real Tamburlaine (whose name was Timur) was a cripple, going through life with a withered right arm (or he may have simply lost two fingers) and a crippled right leg; see Note B in the introductory material at the top of this edition.
34	<i>Cos.</i> Well hast thou portrayed in <u>thy terms of life</u> The face and personage of a wondrous man; <u>Nature</u> doth strive with <u>Fortune</u> and his <u>stars</u>	= "your vivid or lifelike description" ^{12,13}
36	To make him famous in accomplished worth;	35-36: there are three entities who are competing to see who is most responsible for making Tamburlaine famous: (1) his own innate qualities (<i>Nature</i>), (2) personified <i>Fortune</i> (she who gives a person good or bad luck), and (3) Tamburlaine's <i>stars</i> .
38	And well his merits show him to be made His fortune's master and the king of men, That could <u>persuade</u> at such a sudden <u>pinch</u> ,	39-41: Cosroe knows that Theridamas has defected to join Tamburlaine. <i>persuade</i> = ie. persuade to join him. <i>pinch</i> = critical or difficult moment. ¹
40	With reasons of his valour and his life, A thousand <u>sworn</u> and <u>overmatching</u> foes.	41: Theridamas' forces outnumber (<i>overmatch</i>) those of Tamburlaine. <i>sworn</i> = ie. who have sworn to destroy Tamburlaine. ¹²
42	Then, when our <u>powers</u> in points of swords are joined And closed in <u>compass</u> of the killing bullet,	42-43: in brief, "then when our armies (<i>powers</i>) are joined closely in battle". <i>compass</i> = range.
44	Though <u>strait</u> the <u>passage</u> and the <u>port</u> be made That leads to <u>palace</u> of my brother's life,	44-46: a metaphor for killing Mycetes: "if the path (<i>passage</i>) and gate or entrance (<i>port</i>) which lead into Mycetes' body (represented by his <i>palace</i>) are narrow (<i>strait</i>), ie. readily accessible to our swords, then if we fail to take advantage of the situation to kill him, then his luck (<i>Fortune</i>) can rightly brag of its power."
46	Proud is his <u>fortune</u> if we pierce it not.	
	And when the princely Persian diadem	42-47: note the extended alliteration (across six lines) of words beginning with <i>p</i> -.
48	Shall <u>overweigh</u> his weary witless head, And fall like <u>mellowed</u> fruit with <u>shakes</u> of death,	= overburden. = ie. Mycetes'. = ripened. = can also apply to the <i>shaking</i> of a tree.
50	In <u>fair</u> Persia, noble Tamburlaine	50-51: after overthrowing his brother, Cosroe plans to

Shall be my regent and remain as king.

52

Orty. In happy hour we have set the crown

54

Upon your kingly head that seeks our honour,
In joining with the man ordained by Heaven,
56 To further every action to the best.

58

Cen. He that with shepherds and a little spoil
Durst, in disdain of wrong and tyranny,
60 Defend his freedom 'gainst a monarchy,
What will he do supported by a king,
62 Leading a troop of gentlemen and lords,
And stuffed with treasure for his highest thoughts!

64

Cos. And such shall wait on worthy Tamburlaine.
66 Our army will be forty thousand strong,

68

When Tamburlaine and brave Theridamas
Have met us by the river Araris;

70

And all conjoined to meet the witless king,
That now is marching near to Parthia,

72

And with unwilling soldiers faintly armed,
To seek revenge on me and Tamburlaine,
74 To whom, sweet Menaphon, direct me straight.

74

Men. I will, my lord.

76

[*Exeunt.*]

ACT II, SCENE II.

[*Georgia.*]

*Enter Mycetes, Meander, with other Lords
and Soldiers.*

1

Myc. Come, my Meander, let us to this gear.

make Tamburlaine his deputy king over Persia, while Cosroe himself would retain overall reign of the broader Persian empire.

fair = a disyllable here: *fay-er*.³

53: **in happy hour** = in this fortunate moment.

hour = disyllabic here: *hou-er*.

= Tamburlaine.

= booty.

= dares.

58-63: Ceneus describes Tamburlaine's accomplishments with admiration: "if this man, with only a handful of mere shepherds and a little captured booty (*spoil*), dare defend his freedom against a kingdom, imagine what he could achieve if he were given an army of trained nobility and unlimited wealth with which to campaign."

65-73: Cosroe plans to ask Tamburlaine to join their two forces together to fight and overthrow Mycetes and his army; Cosroe will, in return, make Tamburlaine a deputy king.

= Ribner identifies this as probably the Araxes, or Aras River, which acts as the border between modern north-west Iran and Armenia, and flows into the Caspian Sea (p. 65).⁹ This is certainly correct, as Mycetes and his army appear in Georgia in the following scene.

= Cosroe repeatedly refers to his brother as an idiot.

= the Persian district of **Parthia** was southeast of the Caspian Sea, so we may infer that Mycetes is marching west, near or through Parthia, towards Media and beyond.

Scene II: Mycetes and his army are now in the region between the Black and Caspian Seas. Wolff suggests they are approaching the foothills of the Caucasus.

= "let's get to this business (*gear*)".

2	I tell you true, my heart is swoln with wrath	= because of. ¹⁵
4	<u>On</u> this same thievish villain, Tamburlaine, And <u>of</u> that false Cosroe, my traitorous brother.	= "because of", often emended to <i>on</i> to match the phrasing of line 3.
	Would it not grieve a king to be so <u>abused</u>	= perhaps should be emended to <i>'bused</i> , a rare alternate spelling of <i>abused</i> , for the sake of the meter.
6	And have a thousand horsemen ta'en away?	= reference to Theridamas and his cavalry, which defected to Tamburlaine.
8	And, which is worse, to have his diadem Sought for by such <u>scald</u> knaves as love him not?	= scurvy, contemptible. ⁷
10	I think it would; well then, by Heavens I swear, <u>Aurora</u> shall not peep out of her doors,	10: metaphorically, "the next morning shall not dawn". <i>Aurora</i> is the goddess of the dawn.
12	But I will have Cosroë by the head, And kill proud Tamburlaine with point of sword. Tell you the rest. Meander: I have <u>said</u> .	11: "before I kill Cosroe".
14	Meand. Then having passed Armenian deserts now,	= spoken. As in the play's opening speech, Mycetes asks another person to finish speaking his thoughts.
16	And pitched our tents under the Georgian hills, Whose tops are covered with Tartarian thieves,	15-18: Meander recognizes that in entering Georgia, the Persians are likely being observed by Tamburlaine's men.
18	That lie in ambush, waiting for a prey,	<i>Armenia</i> and <i>Georgia</i> are west of the Caspian; Georgia was a thriving independent kingdom before the rise of Tamburlaine; it had the privilege of being brutally sacked by the real Tamburlaine's armies multiple times - six times, to be exact - according to Bartlett (p. 258). ¹¹
20	What should we do but bid them battle straight, And rid the world of those detested troops?	
22	Lest, if we let them linger here awhile, They gather strength by power of fresh supplies.	
24	This country swarms with vile <u>outrageous</u> men That live by rapine and by lawless spoil,	= fierce. ¹³
26	Fit soldiers for the wicked Tamburlaine; And he that could with gifts and promises	
28	Inveigle <u>him</u> that led a thousand horse, And make him <u>false</u> his faith unto his king,	= ie. Theridamas.
30	Will quickly win such as are like himself. Therefore cheer up your minds; prepare to fight;	= betray or violate. ^{1,3} The use of <i>false</i> as a verb may already have been archaic by the late 16th century. ¹
32	He that can take or slaughter Tamburlaine Shall rule the province of <u>Albania</u> :	= a region located just west of the Caspian Sea.
34	<u>Who</u> brings that traitor's head, Theridamas, Shall have a government in Media,	= ie. "he who".
36	Beside the <u>spoil</u> of him and all his <u>train</u> :	= plunder. = retinue.
38	But if Cosroë, (as our <u>spials</u> say, And as we know) remains with Tamburlaine,	= spies. ⁷
40	His highness' pleasure is that he should live, And be reclaimed with princely lenity.	
42	<i>Enter A Spy.</i>	41: stage direction added by Dyce.
44	Spy. An hundred horsemen of my company Scouting abroad upon these <u>champion</u> plains	= champaign, ie. level, unbroken. ¹
46	Have viewed the army of the Scythians, Which make report it far exceeds the king's.	
48	Meand. Suppose they be in number infinite,	

50	<p>Yet being void of martial discipline, All running headlong <u>after greedy spoils</u>, And more regarding gain than victory,</p>	<p>49-51: Meander has a plan, which he outlines at 71f below; he expects to beat the larger army of Tamburlaine, since it is made up of ill-bred rabble who would certainly avoid a fight if they see an opportunity to collect plunder. After digressing into a mythological allusion in lines 52-53, Meander returns to conclude his thought at line 54f. <i>after greedy spoils</i> = usually emended to <i>greedy after spoils</i>, as <i>greedy after</i> was the more common collocation; however, Elizabethan poet Edmund Spenser borrowed Marlowe's exact same expression for his poem <i>The Ruines of Time</i>, published in 1591: "<i>after greedie spoyle of blood...</i>"</p>
52	<p>Like to <u>the cruèl brothers of the earth</u>, <u>Sprong of the teeth of dragons venomous</u>,</p>	<p>52-53: an allusion to the famous story of the founding of the ancient Greek city of Thebes: the demi-god Cadmus, having slain the dragon who guarded the spring near where Thebes would be built, was instructed by Athena to sow the <i>dragon's teeth</i> in the ground. From the teeth quickly grew a race of armed men (<i>the cruel brothers of the earth</i>) who turned on Cadmus; he threw a stone amongst them which upset them, and each, thinking one of their own had tossed the stone, attacked the others. From the five warriors who survived this slaughter grew the founding families of Thebes.⁴²</p>
54	<p>Their careless swords shall <u>lanch</u> their fellows' throats, And make us triumph in their overthrow.</p>	<p>54-55: Tamburlaine's soldiers can be expected to kill each other (like Cadmus' ground-sprung men) in their pursuit of booty, which Meander expects would be more important to them than winning a battle. <i>lanch</i> = pierce.⁴⁴</p>
56	<p><i>Myc.</i> Was there such brethren, sweet Meander, say, That sprung <u>of</u> teeth of dragons venomous?</p>	<p>57-58: Mycetes reveals his ignorance. = from.</p>
60	<p><i>Meand.</i> So poets say, my lord.</p>	<p>= practice of little value.¹</p>
62	<p><i>Myc.</i> And 'tis a <u>pretty toy</u> to be a poet. Well, well, Meander, thou art deeply read, And having thee, I have a jewèl sure. Go on, my lord, and give your <u>charge</u>, I say; Thy <u>wit</u> will make us conquerors to-day.</p>	<p>63-66: Mycetes is lightly ironic. = orders. = cleverness.</p>
68	<p><i>Meand.</i> Then, noble soldiers, to entrap these thieves, That live <u>confounded</u> in disordered troops, If wealth or riches may prevail with them, We have our camels laden all with gold, Which you that be but common <u>soldièrs</u> Shall fling in every corner of the field; And while the <u>base-born</u> Tartars take it up, You, fighting more for honour than for gold, Shall massacre those greedy-minded slaves; And when their scattered army is subdued, And you march on their slaughtered carcasses, Share equally the gold that bought their lives,</p>	<p>= confused.¹³ = pronounced with three syllables: <i>SOL-di-ers</i>. = ie. bastard.</p>

80 And live like gentlemen in Persiä.
 Strike up the drum! and march courageously!
 82 Fortune herself doth sit upon our crests.
 84 **Myc.** He tells you true, my masters: so he does. –
 Drums, why sound ye not, when Meander speaks?
 86

[*Exeunt, drums sounding.*]

ACT II, SCENE III.

[*Georgia.*]

*Enter Cosroe, Tamburlaine, Theridamas, Techelles,
 Usumcasane, and Ortygius, with others.*

1 **Cos.** Now, worthy Tamburlaine, have I reposed
 2 In thy approved fortunes all my hope.
 What think'st thou, man, shall come of our attempts?
 4 For even as from assured oracle,
 I take thy doom for satisfaciön.

6 **Tamb.** And so mistake you not a whit, my lord;
 8 For fates and oracles [of] Heaven have sworn
 To royalize the deeds of Tamburlaine,
 10 And make them blest that share in his attempts.
 And doubt you not but, if you favour me,
 12 And let my fortunes and my valour sway
 To some direction in your martial deeds,

14 The world will strive with hosts of men-at-arms,
 To swarm unto the ensign I support:

16 The host of Xerxes, which by fame is said
 To have drank the mighty Parthian Araris,

18 Was but a handful to that we will have.
 Our quivering lances, shaking in the air,

= to an Englishman, to be a **gentleman** meant to possess enough wealth to avoid engaging in manual labour.

= helmets.¹

= gentlemen, a common form of address, though perhaps used with a hint of irony if directed at the soldiers.

Entering Characters: Tamburlaine's army is now comprised of Cosroe's army, Theridamas' cavalry, and his own Scythians of course.

= ie. "I have placed".

= proven good fortune.

4-5: ie. "I am content to believe in your judgment (**doom**), as if your words were a certain or reliable (**assured**) oracle."

= bit.

= make famous.¹

= "those persons". = who.

12-13: **sway...direction** = "prevail so as to allow me to influence or have authority over".^{14,15}

= multitudes of armed men.¹

= banner.

16-17: **Xerxes**, King of the Achaemenid dynasty of Persia (485-465 B.C.), invaded Greece in 480 B.C. with what the Greek historian Herodotus claimed was over one million men, only to be famously defeated by the Greeks first at Thermopylae, and then at sea at Salamis.

Regarding the size of Xerxes' army, Herodotus wrote "What body of water did his forces not drink dry except for the greatest rivers?" (Strassler, 7.21, p. 505);³⁴ and when his army reached northwest Asia Minor on its way to Greece, Herodotus further wrote, upon the army's arriving at the Scamander River, that it "was the first river it had encountered on its journey from Sardis that failed to provide enough water for the troops and the pack animals attempting to drink from it" (7.43, p. 480).³⁴

Ribner identifies the **Parthian Araris** as the Oxus River north-east of Persia; if this was what Marlowe had in mind, his history was certainly in error.

= compared to (in numbers).

<p>20</p> <p>22</p> <p>24</p> <p>26</p> <p>28</p> <p>30</p> <p>32</p> <p>34</p> <p>36</p> <p>38</p> <p>40</p> <p>42</p> <p>44</p> <p>46</p>	<p>And <u>bullets</u>, like <u>Jove's dreadful thunderbolts</u>,</p> <p><u>Enrolled</u> in flames and fiery smouldering mists,</p> <p>Shall <u>threat</u> the gods more than <u>Cyclopi</u>an wars:</p> <p>And with our sun-bright armour as we march, We'll chase the stars from Heaven and dim their eyes That stand and muse at our admirèd arms.</p> <p>Ther. You see, my lord, what <u>working</u> words he hath;</p> <p>But when you see his actions <u>top</u> his speech, Your speech will <u>stay</u> or so extol his worth</p> <p>As I shall be commended and excused For turning my poor charge to his direction. And these his two <u>renowmèd</u> friends, my lord, Would <u>make one</u> thirst and strive to be retained In such a great degree of amity.</p> <p>Tech. With duty and with amity we yield Our utmost service to the fair Cosroe.</p> <p>Cos. Which I esteem as portion of my crown, Usumcasane and Techelles both, When <u>she</u> that rules in <u>Rhamnus'</u> golden gates, And makes a passage for all prosperous arms, Shall make me solely Emperor of Asiä,</p> <p>Then shall your <u>meeds</u> and valours be <u>advanced</u> To <u>rooms</u> of honour and nobility.</p>	<p>20: bullets = projectiles, such as arrows, and perhaps rocks slung from slings. Jove's...thunderbolts = the king of the gods was frequently portrayed in his guise as the controller of lightning.</p> <p>= enfolded.¹⁵</p> <p>22: an allusion to the Battle of the Titans of Greek mythology. The Titans, offspring of Uranus and Gaea (she being the personification of earth), overthrew the gods who ruled before them, before being overthrown in turn by the Olympian gods (Zeus, etc.). It is this latter war that is called the Battle of the Titans. threat = ie. threaten. Cyclopian = usually alluding to the one-eyed giant, but used here to describe the over-sized Titans generally.</p> <p>23-25: Tamburlaine expects his army's bright armour to both outshine the stars in the night-sky (thus seeming to make them disappear) and blind the enemy when the latter look on that armour.</p> <p>27: Theridamas addresses Cosroe; note the double alliteration in this line; working = efficacious.¹</p> <p>28-29: when Cosroe sees how Tamburlaine's feats surpass (top)⁵ even his abilities in speech, he (Cosroe) can expect to be either dumbstruck or ready to praise him effusively. stay = be arrested.</p> <p>31: ie. "for placing myself and my troops at his disposal". = renowned, a common alternate form. = "cause a person to".¹⁴</p> <p>39: "and I value that service as part of all that I have which is part and parcel of my possessing the crown".</p> <p>41-43: Cosroe believes that Nemesis (she) will work on his behalf; sadly, his confidence will prove to be misplaced. 41: she is Nemesis, the goddess of vengeance and punishment; her job was to watch out for evil-doers, and "(shape) the demeanor of men in their times of prosperity", meaning that if one was blessed with too much good fortune, she would cause that person to experience some suffering to keep all in proportion. Her primary shrine was in Rhamnus in Attica (Murray, p. 186).⁴¹</p> <p>44-45: Cosroe promises great promotions for Tamburlaine's top two commanders when he supplants Mycetes as king. meeds = merits, deservings. advanced = promoted. rooms = offices, positions.</p>
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<p>48 Tamb. Then haste, Cosroë, to be king alone, That I with these, my friends, and all my men May triumph in our long-expected fate. –</p> <p>50 The king, your brother, is now <u>hard at hand</u>; Meet with the fool, and rid your royal shoulders</p> <p>52 Of such a <u>burthen</u> as outweighs the sands And all the craggy rocks of Caspia.</p> <p>54</p> <p style="text-align: center;">56 <i>Enter a Messenger.</i></p> <p>58 Mess. My lord, we have discoverèd the enemy Ready to charge you with a mighty army.</p> <p>60 Cos. Come, Tamburlaine! now <u>whet</u> thy wingèd sword, And lift thy lofty arm <u>into</u> the clouds, 62 That it may reach the King of Persia's crown, And set it safe on my victorious head.</p> <p>64 Tamb. See where it is, the <u>keenest curtle-axe</u></p> <p>66 That e'er made passage <u>thorough</u> Persian arms. <u>These are the wings</u> shall make <u>it</u> fly as swift</p> <p>68 As doth the lightning or the breath of Heaven, And kill as <u>sure</u> as it swiftly flies.</p> <p>70 Cos. Thy words <u>assure</u> me of <u>kind</u> success; 72 Go, valiant soldier, go before and charge The <u>fainting</u> army of that foolish king.</p> <p>74 Tamb. Usumcasane and Techelles, come! 76 We are enough to scare the enemy, And more than <u>needs</u> to make an emperor.</p> <p>78</p> <p style="text-align: right;">[<i>Exeunt to the battle.</i>]</p> <p><u>ACT II, SCENE IV.</u></p> <p>[<i>Georgia, a battlefield.</i>]</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Alarums; soldiers enter and exeunt. Enter Mycetes with his crown in his hand, and offering to hide it.</i></p> <p>1 Myc. Accursed be he that first invented war! 2 They knew not, ah they knew not, simple men,</p>	<p>= close by.</p> <p>= burden.</p> <p>= sharpen. = unto.⁵</p> <p>65: Tamburlaine presumably raises his sword (<i>curtle-axe</i>) here. <i>keenest</i> = sharpest. <i>curtle-axe</i> = a heavy slashing sword, a cutlass.¹</p> <p>= through.</p> <p>67: <i>These are the wings</i> = perhaps meaning his arms; Bevington suggests the reference is to the cutlass' cross-piece. <i>it</i> = ie. his sword.</p> <p>= a disyllable here: <i>sur-er</i>.³</p> <p>71: <i>assure</i> = a tri-syllabic here: <i>a-sur-er</i>. <i>kind</i> = favourable.¹⁴</p> <p>= fearful, lacking courage.¹</p> <p>= is necessary.</p> <p>Scene IV: the scene opens with a portrayal of the battle between Tamburlaine and Mycetes.</p> <p>= calls to arms.</p> <p>= "attempting to hide it"; Mycetes may be looking around, trying to find a likely place to stash his crown, as he enters the stage.</p>
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4	How <u>those were</u> hit by <u>pelting</u> cannon shot, Stand staggering like a quivering aspen leaf, Fearing the force of <u>Boreas' boisterous blasts</u> .	= "those who were". ⁵ = lashing, like hard rain or hail. ¹ = another reference to the god of the north wind, and an intensely alliterative one at that!
6	In what a <u>lamentable</u> case <u>were</u> I If Nature had not <u>given</u> me wisdom's <u>lore</u> ,	= stressed on the first syllable. = "I would be". = a one-syllable word: <i>gi'en</i> . = lessons or instructions. ¹
8	For kings are <u>clouts</u> that every man shoots at, Our crown the <u>pin</u> that thousands seek to <u>cleave</u> ;	8-9: an archery metaphor: a <i>clout</i> is a target at which an archer shoots. <i>pin</i> = the peg at the center of the archer's target that fastens the clout to a post or tree; the archery phrase <i>cleave the pin</i> came into use around this time, with <i>cleave</i> meaning "pierce" or "split". ^{3,5}
10	Therefore in policy I think it good <u>To hide it close</u> ; a goodly stratagem, 12 And far from any man that is a fool:	= ie. "to secretly hide the crown". 12: a fool would not think to employ this strategy (ie. of hiding his crown). = recognized.
14	So shall I not be <u>known</u> ; or if I be, They cannot take away my crown from me. Here will I hide it in this <u>simple</u> hole.	= ordinary. ²
16		
18	<i>Enter Tamburlaine.</i>	17: Mycetes will not have time to properly hide the crown before Tamburlaine enters.
20	Tamb. What, fearful coward, straggling from the camp, When kings themselves are present in the field?	
22	Myc. Thou liest.	22: Mycetes denies he is hiding from the battle.
24	Tamb. Base villain! dar[e]st <u>give the lie</u> ?	= "accuse me of lying?"
26	Myc. Away; I am the king; go; touch me not. Thou break'st the law of arms, unless thou kneel 28 And cry me "mercy, noble king."	
30	Tamb. Are you the <u>witty</u> King of Persiä?	= clever, intelligent; Tamburlaine's sarcasm is lost on the clueless Mycetes.
32	Myc. Ay, <u>marry</u> am I: have you any <u>suit</u> to me?	= an oath, derived from the Virgin Mary. = petition, request.
34	Tamb. I would <u>entreat you</u> speak but three wise words.	= "ask you to".
36	Myc. So I can when I see my time.	
38	Tamb. [<i>Taking crown</i>] Is this your crown?	38: Tamburlaine perhaps picks the crown up out of the hole, though line 49 suggests he takes it from Mycetes' hands.
40	Myc. Ay, didst thou ever see a fairer?	
42	Tamb. You will not sell it, will you?	
44	Myc. Such another word and I will have thee executed. Come, give it me!	
46	Tamb. No; I took it prisoner.	
48	Myc. You lie; I gave it you.	
50	Tamb. Then 'tis mine.	
52		

54 **Myc.** No; I mean I let you keep it.
 56 **Tamb.** Well; I mean you shall have it again.
 Here; take it for a while: I lend it thee,
 58 Till I may see thee hemmed with armèd men;
 Then shalt thou see me pull it from thy head:
 Thou art no match for mighty Tamburlaine.
 60
 [Exit Tamburlaine.]
 62
Myc. O gods! Is this Tamburlaine the thief?
 64 I marvel much he stole it not away.
 66 [Trumpets sound to the battle, and he runs out.]

ACT II, SCENE V.

[Georgia, after the battle.]

*Enter Cosroe, Tamburlaine, Meander, Theridamas,
 Ortygius, Menaphon, Techelles, Usumcasane,
 with others.*

1 **Tamb.** Hold thee, Cosroe! wear two imperial crowns;
 2 Think thee invested now as royally,
 Even by the mighty hand of Tamburlaine,
 4 As if as many kings as could encompass thee
 With greatest pomp, had crowned thee emperor.
 6
Cos. So do I, thrice renownèd man-at-arms,
 8 And none shall keep the crown but Tamburlaine.
 Thee do I make my regent of Persia,
 10 And general lieutenant of my armies. –
 Meander, you, that were our brother's guide,
 12 And chiefest counsellor in all his acts,
 Since he is yielded to the stroke of war,
 14 On your submission we with thanks excuse,
 And give you equal place in our affairs.
 16
Meand. Most happy Emperor, in humblest terms,
 18 I vow my service to your majesty,
 With utmost virtue of my faith and duty.
 20
Cos. Thanks, good Meander: – then, Cosroë, reign,
 22 And govern Persia in her former pomp!
 Now send ambassage to thy neighbour kings,
 24 And let them know the Persian king is changed,
 From one that knew not what a king should do,
 26 To one that can command what 'longs thereto.

And now we will to fair Persepolis,

= surrounded by.

Entering Characters: the combined armies of Tamburlaine, Cosroe and Theridamas have defeated the Persians' home army.

= Cosroe now has both Mycetes' crown and the crown he received from the nobles at Act I.i.167ff.

2-5: "To be crowned by Tamburlaine is like being crowned by as many kings as could surround you."

7: ie. "so do I indeed think of it in such a way".

= deputy king; a likely tri-syllable here: *RE-ge-ent*.

= ie. "I". = "excuse you", ie. "forgive you".

11-15: Meander, we remember, commanded Mycetes' army.

= Dawson suggests "commitment".

= ambassadors.

= ie. belongs.

27: *we will to* = ie. "we will go to"; note the common Elizabethan grammatical construction of this phrase: in the

28 With twenty thousand expert soldiers.
The lords and captains of my brother's camp

30 With little slaughter take Meander's course,
And gladly yield them to my gracious rule. –
32 Ortygius and Menaphon, my trusty friends,
Now will I gratify your former good,
34 And grace your calling with a greater sway.

36 **Orty.** And as we ever aimed at your behoof,
And sought your state all honour it deserved,
38 So will we with our powers and our lives
Endeavour to preserve and prosper it.

40 **Cos.** I will not thank thee, sweet Ortygius;
42 Better replies shall prove my purposes. –
And now, Lord Tamburlaine, my brother's camp
44 I leave to thee and to Theridamas,
To follow me to fair Persepolis.
46 Then will we march to all those Indian mines

My witless brother to the Christians lost,
48 And ransom them with fame and usury.

And till thou overtake me, Tamburlaine,
50 (Staying to order all the scattered troops.)
Farewell, lord regent and his happy friends!
52 I long to sit upon my brother's throne.

54 **Meand.** Your majesty shall shortly have your wish,
And ride in triumph through Persepolis.

56 [Exeunt all but Tamburlaine, Theridamas,
58 Techelles, and Usumcasane.]

60 **Tamb.** "And ride in triumph through Persepolis!"
Is it not brave to be a king, Techelles?
62 Usumcasane and Theridamas,
Is it not passing brave to be a king,
64 "And ride in triumph through Persepolis?"

66 **Tech.** O, my lord, 'tis sweet and full of pomp.

68 **Usum.** To be a king is half to be a god.

70 **Ther.** A god is not so glorious as a king.
I think the pleasure they enjoy in Heaven

presence of a word of intent (*will*), the word of movement (*go*) may be omitted.

Persepolis = the capital of Persia.

= proven.¹⁴

29-31: rather than punish the enemy soldiers whom he has just defeated, Cosroe will accept them as his own.
= ie. follow Meander's example.¹⁵

34: ie. "and promote you to positions of additional power."
There may also be a bit of wordplay, as *calling* can refer to being called by God into a state of *grace*.¹

= ie. "to act for your benefit (*behoof*)".

= "made efforts to give your royal position or person".

41-42: a common motif in Elizabethan drama: it is not sufficient to reward the deserving with simple words of gratitude.

= Marlowe loved to refer to the *mines* of *India*, fabled for the great wealth of gold they contained.

47-48: the reference here is unknown; Wolff hypothesizes that the allusion is to those Mongols or Indians who were converted by the sect of eastern Christians called Nestorians.
with fame and usury = "to our renown and profit" (Jump, p. 36).¹⁴

= "catch up to me (with your troops)".

50: "remaining here only to bring order and assign commands to your scattered forces".

= excellent.

= exceedingly.

= ie. the gods.

72	Cannot compare with kingly joys <u>in</u> earth. – To wear a crown <u>enchased</u> with pearl and gold,	= on. = set or inlaid. ¹
74	Whose <u>virtues</u> carry with it life and death; To ask and have, command and be obeyed;	74: the crown brings its possessor power (<i>virtues</i>) over other people's lives.
76	When looks breed love, with looks to gain the prize, Such power attractive shines in princes' eyes!	
78	Tamb. Why say, Theridamas, wilt thou be a king?	
80	Ther. Nay, though I praise it, I can live without it.	
82	Tamb. What say my other friends? Will you be kings?	
84	Tech. Aye, if I could, with all my heart, my lord.	
86	Tamb. Why, that's well said, Techelles; so would I, And so would you, <u>my masters</u> , would you not?	= sirs.
90	Usum. What then, my lord?	
92	Tamb. Why then, Casane, shall we wish for <u>ught</u> The world <u>affords</u> in <u>greatest novelty</u> ,	= anything, ie. something. 93: the sense is, "that is among the most rare things in the world". <i>affords</i> = provides. <i>greatest novelty</i> = "no matter how new and how rare" (Jump, p. 37). ¹⁴
94	And rest <u>attemptless</u> , faint and <u>destitute</u> ?	94: ie. "and sit here, timorous and deprived of what we desire (<i>destitute</i>), and not go for it (ie. remain <i>attemptless</i>)?"
96	Methinks we should not: I am strongly <u>moved</u> , That if I should desire the Persian crown, I could attain it with a wondrous ease.	= convinced.
98	And would not all our soldiers soon consent, If we should aim at such a <u>dignity</u> ?	= high office. ²
100	Ther. I know they would with our persuasions.	
102	Tamb. Why then, Theridamas, I'll first <u>assay</u> To get the Persian kingdom to myself; Then thou for Parthia; they for Scythia and Media;	= try. 105: if Tamburlaine can win the crown of Persia for himself, he will make his companions deputy kings; Theridamas will get Parthia, while Techelles and Usumcasane will receive Scythia and Media respectively. Line 105 is long.
106	And, if I <u>prosper</u> , all shall be as sure As if <u>the Turk</u> , <u>the Pope</u> , <u>Afric</u> and <u>Greece</u> ,	= succeed. 107: Tamburlaine checks off a list of those who will submit to him: the Ottoman Emperor Bajazeth (<i>the Turk</i>), <i>the Pope</i> , the Sultan of Egypt (<i>Afric</i>), and the Byzantine Emperor (<i>Greece</i>). ¹²
108	Came creeping to us with their crowns <u>apace</u> .	= quickly; but some editors emend to <i>a-piece</i> , the word appearing in later quartos of the play.

110 **Tech.** Then shall we send to this triumphing king,
And bid him battle for his novel crown?

112 **Usum.** Nay, quickly then, before his room be hot.

114 **Tamb.** 'Twill prove a pretty jest, in faith, my friends.

116 **Ther.** A jest to charge on twenty thousand men!
118 I judge the purchase more important far.

120 **Tamb.** Judge by thyself, Theridamas, not me;
122 For presently Techelles here shall haste
To bid him battle ere he pass too far,

And lose more labour than the game will quite.

124 Then shalt thou see this Scythian Tamburlaine,
126 Make but a jest to win the Persian crown. –
Techelles, take a thousand horse with thee,
128 And bid him turn him back to war with us,
That only made him king to make us sport.
We will not steal upon him cowardly,
130 But give him warning and more warriors.
Haste thee, Techelles, we will follow thee. –

132 [Exit Techelles.]

134 What saith Theridamas?

136 **Ther.** Go on for me.

138 [Exeunt.]

ACT II, SCENE VI.

[Georgia or northern Persia.]

*Enter Cosroe, Meander, Ortygius, Menaphon,
with Soldiers.*

1 **Cos.** What means this devilish shepherd to aspire
2 With such a giantly presumption
To cast up hills against the face of Heaven,

110-1: "shall we challenge Cosroe to battle, winner take all?"
novel = newly acquired.¹

= Jump suggests, "before he has time to warm up his throne by sitting on it" (p. 38).¹⁴

115: Tamburlaine momentarily trivializes the gravity of his proposal.

117-8: Theridamas feels plunder and booty (*purchase*)⁵ are preferable to attacking an enormously larger army; Tamburlaine's answer shows Theridamas is not quite yet on the same wavelength as his new boss.
purchase = might also mean "endeavor" or "undertaking"^{1,14}

121-2: ie. Tamburlaine will send Techelles to hurry to offer battle to Cosroe before he and his army have gone too far to turn around.
presently = immediately.

123: ie. if it is too late to recall Cosroe, then the benefit to be gained will not be worth the amount of work required to catch and defeat him.
lose labour = waste an effort.¹
quite = require, repay.

= me (the "royal we").
= "I who". = basically, "for my entertainment".

129-130: Tamburlaine will not unfairly attack Cosroe without giving him a chance to prepare properly for battle.

= "with no opposition from me."¹

Entering Characters: Cosroe has received Tamburlaine's challenge.

1-4: a reference to the *Battle of the Giants*, which must be distinguished from the *Battle of the Titans* (in which the Olympian gods, led by Jupiter, overthrew the Titan gods to

4 And dare the force of angry Jupiter?

6 But as he thrust them underneath the hills,
And pressed out fire from their burning jaws,

8 So will I send this monstrous slave to hell,
Where flames shall ever feed upon his soul.

10 *Meand.* Some powers divine, or else infernal, mixed
Their angry seeds at his conception;
12 For he was never sprong of human race,

14 Since with the spirit of his fearful pride,
He dares so doubtlessly resolve of rule,
And by profession be ambitious.

16 *Orty.* What god, or fiend, or spirit of the earth,
18 Or monster turned to a manly shape,
Or of what mould or mettle he be made,
20 What star or state soever govern him,
Let us put on our meet encountering minds;

22 And in detesting such a devilish thief,
In love of honour and defence of right,
24 Be armed against the hate of such a foe,
Whether from earth, or hell, or Heaven, he grow.

26 *Cos.* Nobly resolved, my good Ortygius;
28 And since we all have sucked one wholesome air,
And with the same proportion of elements
30 Resolve, I hope we are resembled
Vowing our loves to equal death and life.

take over control of the universe). The *Giants* were a race of monsters born from Mother Earth to overthrow the Olympian gods; they threw boulders (*cast up hills*) and flaming trees at Mt. Olympus, but the Olympians, with the help of Hercules, suppressed them.

Cosroe sees himself as the king of the gods (*Jupiter*), and Tamburlaine as the one with *giantly presumption*.

5-6: actually, there was only one giant whom Jupiter buried under a mountain: this was Typhon, a terrible monster with one-hundred heads, who had also challenged the king of the gods for the right to rule the cosmos. Jupiter killed him with a thunderbolt, and buried him under Mt. Etna (*underneath the hills*),¹⁹ hence the description of volcanic activity in line 6.

fire = disyllabic here: *fi-yer*.

10-12: a graphic suggestion that Tamburlaine is the spawn of supernatural beings - maybe good, maybe bad - but not humans.

sprong = sprung.

= awe-inspiring.²

14: "he fearlessly intends to rule".

15: "and openly declares his ambition."¹⁴

profession = avowal, from the verb "to profess".

= ie. "no matter what".

= earth or substance.¹²

21: the sense is "let's get in the right frame of mind to do battle (with Tamburlaine)."

put on = The meaning may be "stir up" or "urge".^{1,20}

meet = fitting, appropriate.

encountering = an adjective, here meaning "that faces in battle".¹

24-25: Ortygius' speech ends with a rhyming couplet.

28-31: an unusually abstract utterance: let's begin with the medieval belief that the human body was made up of four *elements*: air, earth, fire and water. Cosroe's point is that since he and all his comrades breathe (*have sucked*) the same air, the elements should exist in each of them in similar proportions, and that those similar proportions should further become evident when their bodies decompose (*resolve*); therefore, he hopes they will also be all alike in their willingness to love death and life equally - a way to suggest they should not hesitate to die if necessary to fight the good fight.

resolve = dissolve, ie. decompose.¹

32 Let's cheer our soldiers to encounter him,
That grievous image of ingratitude,
34 That fiery thirster after sovereignty,
And burn him in the fury of that flame,
36 That none can quench but blood and empery.

Resolve, my lords and loving soldiers, now
38 To save your king and country from decay. –

Then strike up, drum; – and all the stars that make
40 The loathsome circle of my dated life,

Direct my weapon to his barbarous heart,
42 That thus opposeth him against the gods,
And scorns the powers that govern Persiä!

44
[*Exeunt; drums and trumpets sounding.*]

ACT II, SCENE VII.

[*A battlefield in Georgia or northern Persia.*]

Alarums of battle within.
Enter the armies to the battle, and after the battle,
enter Cosroe, wounded; then Tamburlaine,
Theridamas, Techelles, Usumcasane, with others.

1 **Cos.** Barbarous and bloody Tamburlaine,
2 Thus to deprive me of my crown and life! –
3 Treacherous and false Theridamas,
4 Even at the morning of my happy state,
5 Scarce being seated in my royal throne,
6 To work my downfall and untimely end!
7 An uncouth pain torments my grievèd soul,

8 And Death arrests the organ of my voice,
9 Who, entering at the breach thy sword hath made,
10 Sacks every vein and artier of my heart. –

11 Bloody and insatiate Tamburlaine!

12 **Tamb.** The thirst of reign and sweetness of a crown,
13 That caused the eldest son of heavenly Ops
14 To thrust his doting father from his chair,
15 And place himself in the empyrean Heaven,

resembled = similar in;¹ likely pronounced with four syllables: *re-SEM-bel-ed*.

34-36: ie. "only bloodshed and one with absolute power (**empery**, ie. an emperor, meaning Cosroe himself) can stamp out the fire that burns in Tamburlaine to become a king."

that flame = a metaphor for the ambition of Tamburlaine.

38: **king and country** = the earliest known appearance of this most British of phrases is 1548.

decay = destruction, downfall.²

39-40: **all the stars...life** = Cosroe apostrophizes to the stars in their collective role as influencers of a person's fate.

39-40: **that make...life** = that unmercifully predetermine the length of each person's life.¹²

dated = allotted.⁶

= calls to arms. = (heard from) off-stage.

4-5: ie. "just at the moment when I finally become king".

happy = fortunate or successful.

= unfamiliar.²

8-10: in this interesting metaphor, Death is said to enter a wound like a soldier breaking into a **breach** in a fortification.

Sacks = pillages.³

artier = artery.³

14-16: **Ops** was an ancient goddess, married to Saturnus. Jupiter was the third son (not the **eldest**), and actually the youngest of their six children, and it was he who began the rebellion that overthrew their father, resulting in Jupiter becoming king of the gods.

empyrean Heaven = the highest Heaven, referring to the

Moved me to manage arms against thy state.

18 What better president than mighty Jove?

20 Nature that framed us of four elements,
Warring within our breasts for regiment,

22 Doth teach us all to have aspiring minds:
Our souls, whose faculties can comprehend

24 The wondrous architecture of the world,
And measure every wandering planet's course,

26 Still climbing after knowledge infinite,
And always moving as the restless spheres,

Will us to wear ourselves, and never rest,

28 Until we reach the ripest fruit of all,
That perfect bliss and sole felicity,
30 The sweet fruition of an earthly crown.

32 **Ther.** And that made me to join with Tamburlaine:
For he is gross and like the massy earth,
34 That moves not upwards, nor by princely deeds
Doth mean to soar above the highest sort.

36 **Tech.** And that made us the friends of Tamburlaine,
38 To lift our swords against the Persian king.

40 **Usum.** For as when Jove did thrust old Saturn down,
Neptune and Dis gained each of them a crown,
42 So do we hope to reign in Asiä,
44 If Tamburlaine be placed in Persiä.

outermost sphere of the Ptolemaic universe, containing the throne of God, the residence of the angels, and so forth.

17: **Moved** = incited.

manage arms = lead or conduct war.³

state = greatness, royal person.

18: "why not follow the example set by **Jove**, ie. Jupiter?"
president = precedent, an alternate form.

19-20: the **four elements** of which the body is comprised, and the bodily humours, or fluids, to which they correspond (fire corresponds to yellow bile, air to blood, water to phlegm, earth to black bile), vie for supremacy; a surplus of yellow bile caused one to be choleric; of blood, sanguine; of phlegm, phlegmatic; and of black bile, melancholic.

framed = made, constructed.

regiment = dominion, sovereign rule,³ ie. greatest influence.

22-25: a well-known passage describing the almost divine urge that drives humans to want to learn everything they can about the universe.¹³

23: ie. the way the earth is constructed or constituted.

24: the unique elliptical paths of the planets had been measured as early as the 2nd century B.C. by the Greek astronomer Hipparchus.⁸

wandering planet's = the **planets** are said to **wander** because they do not follow a fixed orbit in the sky as do the stars.

26: ie. "just like the spheres of the universe eternally revolve around the earth".

27: **Will** = direct or command; the subject of the clause, ie. the things doing the commanding, are the **souls** of line 22.

wear = ie. wear out.¹

= happiness.

= note the wordplay of **fruition** with **fruit** in line 28.

33-35: any man who does not strive to raise himself beyond the highest class of people or level of fortune (**sort**) through admirable acts is dull and heavy (**gross**),¹³ and no better than the massive or weighty (**massy**) earth itself.

40-41: after the Olympian gods came to power (see the note at lines 14-16 above), the three sons of the overthrown (and now former king of the gods) Saturn were assigned kingdoms by lot: **Jove** received the heavens, **Neptune** the seas, and **Dis** (Pluto) the underworld. Like Jove's siblings, Usumcasane and Techelles expect to be allotted their own

46 **Cos.** The strangest men that ever nature made!
 I know not how to take their tyrannies.
 My bloodless body waxeth chill and cold,
 48 And with my blood my life slides through my wound;
 My soul begins to take her flight to hell,
 50 And summons all my senses to depart. –
 The heat and moisture, which did feed each other,
 52 For want of nourishment to feed them both,
 Is dry and cold; and now doth ghastly Death
 54 With greedy talents gripe my bleeding heart,

And like a harpy tires on my life.

56 Theridamas and Tamburlaine, I die:
 And fearful vengeance light upon you both!

58
 60 *[Cosroe dies.
 Tamburlaine takes his crown and puts it on.]*

62 **Tamb.** Not all the curses which the Furies breathe,
 Shall make me leave so rich a prize as this. –
 64 Theridamas, Techelles, and the rest,
 Who think you now is King of Persia?

66 **All.** Tamburlaine! Tamburlaine!

68 **Tamb.** Though Mars himself, the angry god of arms,
 70 And all the earthly potentates conspire
 To dispossess me of this diadem,
 72 Yet will I wear it in despite of them,
 As great commander of this eastern world,
 74 If you but say that Tamburlaine shall reign.

76 **All.** Long live Tamburlaine and reign in Asia!

kingdoms to rule. The implication, of course, is that Tamburlaine is to be identified with Jove (the new king of the gods) and Cosroe the former monarch Saturn.

= severe or merciless exercises of power.¹

= grows.

= passage to Hades.

51-54: with his blood (possessing *heat and moisture*) flowing away, Cosroe's body retains only the properties of earth (*dry and cold*), and as such, with his humours no longer balanced, is gripped (*gripe* = grip, seize) by Death.

The four elements which comprise the human body both corresponded with each of the four humours and were identified with certain qualities by Aristotle in Book II of his *On Generation and Corruption*:

(1) blood (a humour) and air (an element) are hot and moist;

(2) earth and black bile are cold and dry;

(3) fire and yellow bile are hot and dry; and

(4) water and phlegm are cold and wet.

When the humours are out of balance, illness sets in.^{14,15,21}

talents = talons, a common alternate form. The *talons* go on to connect metaphorically to the *harpy* of the next line.

55: *harpy* = the *harpies* were three mythical monsters, often pictured as birds with human heads, who were originally goddesses of the storm; they were punishers of crime, and also were imagined to carry their victims off of earth (Murray, p. 190-1).^{19,41}

tires = to *tire* was a term from falconry, describing a hawk tearing its prey with its beak; *tires* is disyllabic here: *ty-ers*.

= the *Furies* were mythological creatures with the appearance of monsters, whose job it was to punish those who committed certain particularly egregious crimes, such as murder of or disobedience to one's parents, by perpetually tormenting them.

= ie. war.

= monarchs.

78 **Tamb.** So now it is more surer on my head,
80 Than if the gods had held a parliament,
And all pronounced me King of Persia.

82

[*Exeunt.*]

END OF ACT II.

= ie. more secure.

= not an anachronism, as *parliament* was in use in English as early as 1300,¹ and in French of course before that; though it seems unlikely Tamburlaine would be familiar with the word.

ACT III.

SCENE I.

[Anatolia, near Constantinople.]

*Enter Bajazeth, the Kings of Fess, Morocco,
and Argier, with others in great pomp.*

1 **Baj.** Great Kings of Barbary and my portly bassoos,

2 We hear the Tartars and the eastern thieves,
3 Under the conduct of one Tamburlaine,
4 Presume a bickering with your emperor,

5 And think to rouse us from our dreadful siege
6 Of the famous Greciän Constantinople.

7 You know our army is invincible;
8 As many circumcisèd Turks we have,

And warlike bands of Christiäns renied,

Scene I: we join the Ottoman army, which is besieging the Byzantine capital of Constantinople.

Entering Characters: *Bajazeth* is the Sultan of the Ottoman Turks. He was a real historical figure, *Bayezid I*, who ruled the Ottomans from 1389 until 1403. The accompanying kings are basically vassals of Bajazeth, ruling lands that have been conquered by the Ottomans; as such, they serve at Bajazeth's pleasure, and are required to support and contribute troops and arms to Bajazeth's army whenever he calls for them.

Marlowe enjoyed borrowing many of the exotic place-names for *Tamburlaine* from the Ortelius maps. On the map of Africa, *Maroco* (Morocco) is the name of both a city and the region; Marlowe likely intends Morocco here to be the city (perhaps modern Marrakech?). *Fess* (modern *Fez*) is a still-extant city in northern Morocco, and *Argier* is the city of Algiers.

As a matter of history, at the time of our play - about 1400 A.D. - the Ottomans only occupied western Asia Minor, most of Greece, and much of south-eastern Eastern Europe. Only in the 16th century would they bring North Africa into their orbit.

1: *Barbary* = Ortelius' map labels the area of North Africa west of Egypt as *Barbary*, a collective name for the lands which include the kingdoms of Fess, Morocco and Argier.

portly = stately.¹

bassoos = Bashaws, or Pashas, Turkish governors or military commanders.³

= leadership.¹⁴

= the sense is "to pick a fight". = meaning Bajazeth himself.

5-6: as a factual matter, the Ottomans had besieged Constantinople from 1391-8, but were engaged in invading Greece around the time of the real Tamburlaine's arrival in Anatolia in 1400. Tamburlaine's arrival seemed a godsend for the Europeans (the Byzantine capital would not fall to the Turks until 1453).

Grecian has three syllables here.

= that the followers of Islam practiced circumcision was well-known since the days Muhammad; a tradition has it that the Prophet himself invited the 7th century Byzantine emperor Heraclius to join Islam. During his research into the subject, Heraclius learned of the practice of circumcision amongst Muslims.¹⁶

9: a reference to the Sultan's Janissary corps, an elite body of infantry formed in the 14th century, and initially composed of captured Christian young men who were forced to convert to Islam.¹⁷

renied = ie. "who have renounced their Christian faith."

10	As hath the ocean or the <u>Terrene</u> sea	= ie. Mediterranean.
	Small drops of water when the moon begins	
12	To join in one her semi-circled horns.	11-12: <i>when the moon...horns</i> = a lovely poetic image of the moon growing full, which causes the tides to rise (Ribner, p. 76). ⁹
	Yet <u>would we not</u> be <u>braved with</u> foreign power,	= ie. "I will not". = "challenged by a". ²
14	Nor raise our siege before <u>the Grecians yield</u> ,	= ie. the Byzantines surrender Constantinople.
	Or breathless lie before the city walls.	15: or lie slaughtered in front of the city's walls.
16		
	K. of Fess. <u>Renowmèd</u> Emperor, and mighty general,	= ie. renowned.
18	What if you sent the bassoes of your guard	
	To <u>charge him</u> to remain in Asiä,	= "command Tamburlaine".
20	Or else to threaten death and deadly arms	
	<u>As from the mouth of</u> mighty Bajazeth.	= "as spoken by".
22		
	Baj. <u>Hie thee</u> , my basso, fast to Persiä,	= "hurry yourself".
24	Tell him thy Lord, the Turkish Emperor,	
	<u>Dread</u> Lord of Afric, Europe, and Asia,	= ie. held in awe; ¹ <i>dread lord</i> , or <i>dread sovereign lord</i> , was a common address form.
26	Great King and conqueror of Graecia,	
	The ocean, Terrene, and the <u>Coal-black sea</u> ,	= ie. Black Sea.
28	The high and highest monarch of the world,	
	<u>Wills</u> and commands (for say not I entreat),	= orders (him). = "don't say that I am asking or begging".
30	Not once to set his foot on Africa,	
	Or spread his colours [once] in Graecia,	
32	Lest he incur the fury of my wrath.	
	Tell him I am content to take a truce,	
34	Because I hear he bears a valiant mind:	
	But if, presuming on his <u>silly</u> power,	= feeble or foolish.
36	He be so mad to manage arms with me,	36: ie. "he is crazy enough to make war on me".
	Then stay thou with him; say, I bid thee so:	
38	And if, before the sun have measured Heaven	
	With triple circuit, thou regret us not,	38-39: "and if, before three days pass, you have not returned to me".
40	We mean to take <u>his</u> morning's next arise	
	For messenger he will not be <u>reclaimed</u> ,	40-41: ie. "I will interpret your absence on the fourth morning as a message telling me Tamburlaine will not be restrained (<i>reclaimed</i>)." ¹ <i>his</i> = ie. the sun's.
42	And mean to fetch thee in despite of him.	42: "and I will then come fetch you in spite of him".
44	Basso. Most great and <u>puissant</u> monarch of the earth,	= mighty.
	Your basso will accomplish your <u>behest</u> ,	= bidding. ²
46	And show your <u>pleasure</u> to <u>the Persiän</u> ,	= will. ¹⁴ = ie. Tamburlaine, as the new king of Persia.
	As fits the <u>legate</u> of the stately Turk.	= representative.
48		
	[Exit Basso.]	
50		
	K. of Arg. They say he is the King of Persiä;	
52	But, if he dare attempt to <u>stir your siege</u> ,	= "disrupt your siege of Constantinople".
	"Twere requisite he should be ten times more,	
54	For all flesh quakes at your magnificence.	53-54: the sense is, "he would need to be ten times more potent than he is if wants to have hope to take you on, for you are so powerful."

56	Baj. True, <u>Argiër</u> ; and trembles at my looks.	= Bajazeth addresses the King of Argier by the land he rules over.
58	K. of Mor. The spring is hindered by your smothering <u>host</u> , For neither rain can fall upon the earth, Nor sun <u>reflex</u> his virtuous beams thereon, The ground is <u>mantled</u> with <u>such multitudes</u> .	58-61: Bajazeth's army is so large that it completely blankets all the available ground, preventing nature from operating properly. host = army. = cast. ² = covered. = ie. so many soldiers.
62	Baj. All this is true as holy <u>Mahomet</u> ; And all the trees are <u>blasted</u> with our breaths.	= Muhammad (570-632 A.D.), prophet and founder of Islam. = laid waste. ²
66	K. of Fess. What thinks your greatness best to be achieved In pursuit of the city's overthrow?	66-67: "how shall we go about capturing Constantinople?"
68	Baj. <u>I will the captive pioners of Argier</u>	69: I will = ie. "I command". the captive...Argier = the impressed labourers provided by the King of Argier to accompany the Sultan's army. pioners = pioneers, ie. sappers, those whose job within the army is to build and repair fortifications, defenses, tunnels, and the like.
70	Cut off the water that by leaden pipes Runs to the city from the <u>mountain Carnon</u> .	= the reference is unknown, and a search of Ortelius' maps failed to discover any such name. Wolff cites an earlier commentator who noted the similarity of the Turkish word for horn (<i>korna</i>) to Carnon , suggesting a connection to Constantinople's Golden Horn. The Byzantine aqueduct system was vast, with lengthy conduits stretching from deep in Thrace (the European side of the Bosphorus) delivering water to the city.
72	Two thousand <u>horse</u> shall forage up and down, That no relief or succour come by land:	= cavalry.
74	And all the sea my galleys <u>countermand</u> . Then shall our <u>footmen</u> lie within the trench,	= control. ¹ = infantry.
76	And with their <u>cannons</u> <u>mouthed like</u> <u>Orcus' gulf</u> .	76: cannons = modern artillery had been in use in the Muslim and European worlds since the 13th century. mouthed like = ie. "with mouths as big as those of". Orcus' gulf = the opening to Hades. Orcus was another name for Pluto, or Dis.
78	Batter the walls, and we will enter in; And thus the Grecians shall be conquerèd.	
80	[<i>Exeunt.</i>]	
	ACT III, SCENE II.	
	[<i>Persia or Anatolia.</i>]	
	<i>Enter Zenocrate, Agydas, Anippe, with others.</i>	Entering Characters: Tamburlaine's prisoners enter the stage; Anippe is Zenocrate's maid.
1	Agyd. Madam Zenocrate, may I presume	
2	To know the cause of these <u>unquiet</u> fits,	= restless. ²

4	That <u>work</u> such trouble to your <u>wonted</u> rest? 'Tis more than pity such a heavenly face Should by heart's sorrow <u>wax</u> so wan and pale,	= ie. bring. = (otherwise) accustomed. = grow. = abduction. ² = "of all the injuries done to you".
6	When your offensive <u>rape</u> by Tamburlaine, (Which <u>of your whole displeasures</u> should be most,)	
8	Hath seemed to be digested long ago.	8: Agydas thought that Zenocrate had already adjusted enough to her unfortunate circumstances, at least so that she should not seem so disturbed anymore.
10	Zeno. Although it be digested long ago, As his <u>exceeding favours</u> have deserved,	= good looks. = ie. Juno, the sister and husband of Jove. = "my initial feelings of".
12	And might content <u>the Queen of Heaven</u> , as well As it hath changed <u>my first conceived</u> disdain,	
14	Yet since a farther passion feeds my thoughts With ceaseless and <u>disconsolate conceits</u> ,	14-15: "but since then my mind is troubled by other never-ending and disheartening (<i>disconsolate</i>) notions (<i>conceits</i>)". ⁵
16	Which dyes my looks so lifeless as they are, And might, <u>if my extremes had full events</u> ,	16: ie. "which gives my face its lifeless hue". = "if my hardships proceed to their natural conclusions"; Ribner suggests "if my violent passions were given full expression in action" (p. 78). ⁹
18	Make me the ghastly <u>counterfeit</u> of death.	= picture or image. ⁵
20	Agyd. Eternal Heaven sooner be dissolved, And all that pierceth <u>Phoebe's</u> silver eye,	20-21: "may the heavens and all that the moon sees below it (meaning the earth) melt away". Phoebe's = Phoebe was a Titan goddess who was associated with the moon.
22	Before such <u>hap</u> fall to Zenocrate!	= occurrence or fate. ¹
24	Zeno. Ah, life and soul, <u>still hover</u> in <u>his</u> breast And leave my body <u>senseless</u> as the earth,	= "forever linger". ¹ = ie. Tamburlaine's. = bereft of any of the physical senses.
26	Or else unite you to his life and soul, That I may live and die with Tamburlaine!	24-27: Zenocrate has apostrophized to her own <i>life and soul</i> : either they should dwell in Tamburlaine, but abandon her and leave her dead (should Tamburlaine not love her), or they should unite with Tamburlaine's life and soul, so they may be together always.
28		
30	<i>Enter, behind, Tamburlaine, Techelles, and others.</i>	29ff: Tamburlaine will covertly listen in on the conversation between Agydas and Zenocrate; a convention of the Elizabethan stage allowed characters to spy on each other, confident that they would not be caught.
32	Agyd. With Tamburlaine! Ah, fair Zenocrate, Let not a man so vile and barbarous, That holds you from your father <u>in despite</u> ,	= out of spite, ie. in defiance. ¹⁴
34	And keeps you from the honours of a queen, (Being <u>supposed</u> his worthless concubine,)	= suspected or reckoned to be. ¹
36	Be honoured with your love <u>but for necessity</u> .	= "unless it is necessary for you to love him (or act as if you love him);" the line as a whole may be a delicate way of saying, "be given access to your body unless he forces himself you."
	So, now the mighty Soldan hears of you,	37-40: once Zenocrate's father, the Soldan of Egypt, learns

38 Your highness needs not doubt but in short time
 He will with Tamburlaine's destruction
 40 Redeem you from this deadly servitude.

42 **Zeno.** Leave to wound me with these words,

And speak of Tamburlaine as he deserves.
 44 The entertainment we have had of him
 Is far from villainy or servitude,
 46 And might in noble minds be counted princely.

48 **Agyd.** How can you fancy one that looks so fierce,
 Only disposed to martial stratagems?
 50 Who, when he shall embrace you in his arms,
 Will tell how many thousand men he slew;
 52 And when you look for amorous discourse,
 Will rattle forth his facts of war and blood,
 54 Too harsh a subject for your dainty ears.

56 **Zeno.** As looks the Sun through Nilus' flowing stream,
 Or when the Morning holds him in her arms,

58 So looks my lordly love, fair Tamburlaine;
 His talk much sweeter than the Muses' song
 60 They sung for honour 'gainst Piërides,

Or when Minerva did with Neptune strive:

62 And higher would I rear my estimate
 Than Juno, sister to the highest god,
 64 If I were matched with mighty Tamburlaine.

66 **Agyd.** Yet be not so inconstant in your love;
 But let the young Arabian live in hope
 68 After your rescue to enjoy his choice.

You see though first the King of Persiä,
 70 Being a shepherd, seemed to love you much,

of their capture, he will no doubt come rescue them.
 = liberate, free.

42: **Leave** = cease.
 Dyce emends **Leave** to **Agydas**, **leave**, suspecting
 the line is corrupted.

= that is, Agydas should speak approvingly of him!
 = treatment. = from.
 = subjection.⁷
 = accounted, ie. considered.

= love.

= words of love, or conversation as between two lovers.
 = deeds or exploits.

= the Nile River's.
 57: a lovely image of Aurora, the goddess of the morning,
 cradling the sun god (**him**) in her arms.

59-60: the nine **Muses** were the patron goddesses of music,
 song, and all the arts. The reference here is to the story told
 by Ovid in *Metamorphoses*: Pieros, a Thracian, had nine
 daughters (the **Pierides**) whom he named after the nine
 Muses, and he challenged the Muses to a singing
 competition with his daughters. The Muses won, and in
 punishment for their presumption, the nine girls were turned
 into magpies (Humphries, pp. 116-128).²²

61: **Minerva** (the Roman Athena) and **Neptune** (the Roman
 Poseidon) quarreled over who should have sovereignty of
 Attica (the region of central Greece including Athens). It
 was finally agreed that whichever of the two could perform a
 miracle that bestowed the greatest gift to Attica would rule.
 Poseidon, going first, caused a spring of sea water - not of
 much value - to well up from a certain rock; Minerva then
 produced the first olive tree to grow from the same rock,
 giving her the victory (Murray, p. 51).⁴¹
 It is unclear exactly how the comparison of Minerva to
 Tamburlaine in this context is intended to flatter the
 conqueror.

62-64: "I would raise my worth to a level higher than that
 of **Juno**, **sister** of Jupiter, if I were married (**matched**) to
 Tamburlaine." Since Juno was also the wife of Jupiter, she
 was also queen of the gods.

= disloyal.
 67-68: Zenocrate, we remember, has been promised to the
 King of Arabia, Alcidamas; see Act I.ii.88.

69-73: Agydas notices that Tamburlaine no longer pays
 any attention to Zenocrate since he took the throne

72	Now in his majesty he leaves those looks, Those words of favour, and those comfortings, And gives no more than common courtesies.	of Persia. <i>first</i> (line 69) = ie. at first.
74	Zeno. <u>Thence</u> rise the tears that so <u>distain</u> my cheeks,	= from there. = stain, ie. deprive of their natural colour. ¹
76	Fearing his love through my unworthiness. –	76: "afraid that I am not worthy of his love."
78	[<i>Tamburlaine goes to her and takes her away</i> <i>lovingly by the hand, looking wrathfully on Agydas,</i> <i>and says nothing.</i>]	80: Tamburlaine's silence is ominous, and Agydas will recognize it as so.
80		
82	[<i>Exeunt all but Agydas.</i>]	
84	Agyd. Betrayed by fortune and suspicious love, Threatened with frowning wrath and jealousy, 86 Surprised with fear of hideous revenge, I stand aghast; but most <u>astoniëd</u>	= dismayed; predecessor to "astonished", ¹ <i>astoniëd</i> has four syllables: <i>as-TON-i-ed</i> .
88	To see his <u>choler</u> <u>shut in secret thoughts</u> , And wrapt in silence of his angry soul. 90 Upon his brows was portrayed ugly death;	88-90: Agydas saw in the silent but dreadful look Tamburlaine gave him a vision of his own doom. <i>choler</i> = rage. <i>shut in secret thoughts</i> = ie. unexpressed.
92	And in his eyes the furies of his heart That shine as <u>comets</u> , <u>menacing</u> revenge, And casts a pale complexion on his cheeks. 94 As when the seaman sees <u>the Hyades</u>	= <i>comets</i> were believed to be omens of evil. = threatening. 94-105: in this extended metaphor, Agydas compares his present horror at the look directed towards him by Tamburlaine to that felt by a sailor when he is caught in a violent storm. <i>the Hyades</i> = the seven daughters of Hyas; they wept when their brother (also named Hyas) was killed by a wild animal; the sisters were changed into a constellation, forming the head of Taurus the Bull. Their appearance usually indicates rain, hence the storm described in the following lines. ¹⁹
96	Gather an army of <u>Cimmerian</u> clouds,	= the <i>Cimmerians</i> were an ancient people who lived around the Black Sea, and were fabled to live in continuous darkness; hence <i>Cimmerian</i> was frequently used by extension to refer to anything dark or black. ¹
98	(<u>Auster</u> and <u>Aquilon</u> with wingèd steeds, All sweating, <u>tilt</u> about the watery heavens, 98 With shivering spears enforcing thunder claps, And from their shields strike flames of <u>lightning</u> .)	= the south and north winds, respectively. ²⁵ = joust. 98: the colliding spears produce thunder. ¹² = <i>lightning</i> is tri-syllabic: <i>LIGHT-en-ing</i> .
100	All-fearful folds his sails and <u>sounds</u> the <u>main</u> , Lifting his prayers to the heavens for aid 102 Against the terror of the winds and waves, So fares Agydas for the late-felt frowns 104 That sent a tempest to my <u>daunted</u> thoughts, And make my soul <u>divine</u> <u>her</u> overthrow.	100: ie. "the seaman, afraid, lowers his sails and measures the depth of (<i>sounds</i>) the sea (<i>main</i>) below him". = overwhelmed with fear. ¹ = predict. = ie. Agydas' own soul's.
106		
108	<i>Re-enter Techelles with a naked dagger,</i> <i>followed by Usumcasane.</i>	

110	Tech. See you, Agydas, how the king <u>salutes</u> you? He bids you <u>prophesy</u> what it imports.	= greets. 111: ie. "he asks you to interpret for us the meaning of this dagger." Prophesy is a verb; its final syllable rhymes with <i>sky</i> .
112		
114	<i>[Gives Agydas a dagger.]</i>	
116	Agyd. I prophesied before, and now I <u>prove</u> The killing frowns of jealousy and love.	= discover through experience. ¹⁴ 116: Agydas interestingly ascribes jealousy as a reason his captor wants him out of the way.
118	He needed not with words confirm my fear, For words are vain where working tools present The naked action of my threatened end:	118-9: "words are useless when I have been presented with an instrument which may be used to finish myself off."
120	It says, Agydas, thou shalt surely die, And of extremities elect the least;	121: perhaps "if you (speaking to himself) must die, go out by the least horrible way".
122	More honour and less pain it may procure To die by this <u>resolvèd</u> hand of thine,	= determined.
124	Than <u>stay</u> the torments <u>he</u> and Heaven have sworn. Then <u>haste</u> , Agydas, and prevent the plagues	= wait for. = ie. Tamburlaine.
126	Which thy prolongèd fates may draw on thee. Go, wander, free from fear of tyrant's rage,	= hurry.
128	Removèd from the torments and the hell, Wherewith he may excruciate thy soul,	127-9: in death, Agydas can escape whatever tortures Tamburlaine may have in store for him.
130	And let Agydas by Agydas die, And with this stab slumber eternally.	130: ie. "I am better off to die by my own hand than by that of Tamburlaine."
132		
134	<i>[Stabs himself.]</i>	
136	Tech. Usumcasane, see, how right the man Hath <u>hit</u> the meaning of my lord, the king.	= ie. understood, comprehended.
138	Usum. 'Faith, and Techelles, it was manly done; And since he was so wise and honourable,	138-141: since Agydas, in killing himself without fuss, proved himself honourable, and no coward, Usumcasane suggests they request from Tamburlaine that he be given a funeral worthy of his status and honour.
140	Let us afford him now the bearing hence, And crave his triple-worthy burial.	
142	Tech. Agreed, Casane; we will honour him.	
144	<i>[Exeunt bearing out the body.]</i>	
<u>ACT III, SCENE III.</u>		
<i>[Anatolia.]</i>		
<i>Enter Tamburlaine, Techelles, Usumcasane, Theridamas, <u>a Basso</u>, Zenocrate, Anippe, with others.</i>		
1	Tamb. Basso, <u>by this</u> thy lord and master knows	= the Sultan's emissary to Tamburlaine. = by now.

<p>2 I mean to meet him in <u>Bithynia</u>:</p> <p>4 <u>See how he comes!</u> tush, Turks are full of brags, And menace more than they can well perform.</p> <p>6 Alas! poor Turk! his fortune is too weak T' encounter with the strength of Tamburlaine. 8 View well my camp, and speak <u>indifferently</u>; Do not my captains and my soldiers look 10 As if they meant to conquer Africa?</p> <p>12 Bas. Your men are valiant, but their number few, And cannot terrify <u>his mighty host</u>. 14 My lord, the great commander of the world, Besides fifteen <u>contributory</u> kings,</p> <p>16 Hath now in arms ten thousand Janissaries, Mounted on <u>lustly Mauritanian steeds</u>,</p> <p>18 Brought to the war by men of Tripoli; Two hundred thousand footmen that have served 20 In two set battles fought in Graecia;</p> <p>22 And <u>for the expedition</u> of this war, If he <u>think good</u>, can from his garrisons Withdraw as many more to follow him.</p> <p>24 Tech. The more he brings the greater is the <u>spoil</u>, 26 For when they perish by our warlike hands, We mean to set our footmen on their steeds,</p> <p>28 And <u>rifle</u> all those stately Janissars.</p> <p>30 Tamb. But will those kings accompany your lord?</p>	<p>= a small region, and one-time kingdom, at the extreme northwest of Asia Minor, bordering the Black Sea, and not far from Constantinople. Bithynia is pronounced <i>bi-THY-ni-a</i>, a four-syllable word, with the stress on the second syllable.</p> <p>3: Tamburlaine is sarcastic, mocking Bajazeth for his absence.¹²</p> <p>4: ie. the Turks' bark is worse than their bite.</p> <p>= "retrieve you from here!" Tamburlaine has sardonically recalled the final words delivered by Bajazeth to the Basso at Act III.i.42.</p> <p>= objectively, without bias.</p> <p>= "Bajazeth's mighty army."</p> <p>= the kings of those lands which the Ottomans have conquered would be required to pay a tribute to their new master, hence they are contributory, or tributary.¹</p> <p>17: lustly = vigorous. Mauritania is the ancient land now comprising Morocco and western Algeria; this area was famous for its horses.</p> <p>= candidates for the two battles include: (1) the Battle of Kosovo (1389), in which the Ottomans wiped out a coalition of armies led by the Serbs; it was in this fight that Sultan Murad I (father of Bayezid, our Bajazeth) was killed, and the Ottomans' rule passed to his son Bayezid; (2) the Battle of Rovine (1395), in which a Wallachian army at least drew even with the Turks, but prince Mircea of Wallachia still ended up having to pay tribute to the Sultan, and recognize his authority; and (3) the Battle of Nicopolis (1396), in which the Turks, still led by Bayezid, destroyed a crusading army led by Sigismund, the king of Hungary and Croatia.</p> <p>= "in order to expedite".¹⁴</p> <p>= ie. "decides to do so", or "believes it to be a good idea".</p> <p>= plunder.</p> <p>27: ie. Tamburlaine will take the Turks' horses and make cavalrymen of his own foot-soldiers.</p> <p>= rob, pillage.</p> <p>30: Tamburlaine is interested to know if the contributory</p>
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32 **Bas.** Such as his highness please; but some must stay
To rule the provinces he late subdued.

34 **Tamb.** [To his Officers]
36 Then fight courageously: their crowns are yours;
This hand shall set them on your conquering heads,
38 That made me Emperor of Asiä.

40 **Usum.** Let him bring millions infinite of men,
Unpeopling Western Africa and Greece,
42 Yet we assure us of the victory.

44 **Ther.** Even he that in a trice vanquished two kings,

More mighty than the Turkish emperor,
46 Shall rouse him out of Europe, and pursue
His scattered army till they yield or die.

48 **Tamb.** Well said, Theridamas; speak in that mood;
50 For will and shall best fitteth Tamburlaine,

Whose smiling stars give him assurèd hope
52 Of martial triumph ere he meet his foes.

I that am termed the scourge and wrath of God,
54 The only fear and terror of the world,
Will first subdue the Turk, and then enlarge
56 Those Christian captives, which you keep as slaves,

Burdening their bodies with your heavy chains,
58 And feeding them with thin and slender fare;
That naked row about the Terrene sea,

60 And when they chance to breathe and rest a space,
Are punished with bastones so grievously,

kings will fight alongside Bajazeth; the more kings there on the battlefield, the more crowns and kingdoms Tamburlaine can collect!

44: **he** = ie. Tamburlaine.

in a trice = in only a moment, just like that. This phrase, and its predecessor *at a trice*, date back to the 15th and early 16th centuries.¹

two kings = ie. Mycetes and Cosroe.

= ie. "he who is more".

= force Bajazeth from cover or hiding; **rouse** is a hunting term.¹

= ie. as opposed to conditional words such as "might" or "may".

= expectation.

= ie. "even before".

53: the epithet **Scourge of God** was first applied to the 5th century empire-builder Attila the Hun.

55-56: it is unlikely Tamburlaine was much concerned with Christians as he conquered his way across Asia. However, his image in Europe at the time of his battle and victory over the Turks was that of the savior of European civilization: during the period when Timur (Tamburlaine) was invading Asia Minor, the Ottomans were overrunning Greece and south-eastern Europe. A wide collection of European soldiers combined to try to stop the advance of the Turks, but were destroyed in the Battle of Nicopolis (1396) in what is now northern Bulgaria. The fall of Constantinople itself seemed imminent. Tamburlaine's invasion forced the Turks to fall back to Asia Minor to face him, and their destruction at the Mongols' hands provided a half-century reprieve for the Byzantine capital and Europe.¹⁸

The Turks, as victorious armies have done since time immemorial, enslaved captured foes, most of whom at this point were Christians.

= Tamburlaine refers to the employment of European slaves in the galleys of Muslim ships; but see the note below after line 67.

= bastinadoes, ie. rods or sticks.³

62 That they lie panting on the galley's side,
And strive for life at every stroke they give.
64 These are the cruël pirates of Argier,
That damnèd train, the scum of Africa,
66 Inhabited with stragglings runagates,
That make quick havoc of the Christian blood;

68 But as I live that town shall curse the time
That Tamburlaine set foot in Africa.

70
72 *Enter Bajazeth with his Bassoes, the Kings of Fess,
Morocco, and Argier, Zabina and Ebea.*

74 **Baj.** Bassoes and Janissaries of my guard,
Attend upon the person of your lord,
76 The greatest potentate of Africa.

78 **Tamb.** Techelles, and the rest, prepare your swords;
I mean t' encounter with that Bajazeth.

80 **Baj.** Kings of Fess, Moroccus, and Argier,

82 He calls me Bajazeth, whom you call lord!
Note the presumption of this Scythian slave! –
84 I tell thee, villain, those that lead my horse
Have to their names titles of dignity,

86 And dar'st thou bluntly call me Bajazeth?

88 **Tamb.** And know, thou Turk, that those which lead
my horse,
Shall lead thee captive thorough Africa;
90 And dar'st thou bluntly call me Tamburlaine?

92 **Baj.** By Mahomet my kinsman's sepulchre,

And by the holy Alcoran I swear,

= crew or collection of people.¹
= runaways,²⁰ ie. deserters.¹⁴

64-67: the great age of Mediterranean piracy only began in the 16th century, after the Ottomans had brought North Africa under their control, and of course more than a century after the events of our play.

From 1530 to 1780, it is estimated that over one million Europeans were captured and enslaved by African pirates.³⁵ The pirates not only made prizes of European shipping, but also raided the extensive European coastline for slaves, even descending on English villages occasionally, as they did in Cornwall in 1625 - right in the middle of the great era of English Renaissance drama!³⁶

= ie. Argier.

69: The real Tamburlaine never made it to Africa.

Entering Characters: the leaders of the Turkish army arrive in Tamburlaine's vicinity. It became conventional in Elizabethan drama for the leaders of opposing armies to be given an opportunity to meet face-to-face and exchange taunts before commencing battle.

Zabina is Bajazeth's wife, **Ebea** her servant.

81-86: Bajazeth is outraged that Tamburlaine dares refer to him by his given name instead of his title!

Moroccus = common alternate form of **Morocco**.

84-85: "even the lowly menials whose job it is to lead the horses have titles that must be respected".

to = ie. added to.¹⁴

= note how Bajazeth and Tamburlaine address each other with the insulting **thou**, rather than the respectful **you**.
= through.

90: Wolff observes that the Sultan has not yet actually called Tamburlaine by name.

92: rulers of Islamic states could assert their legitimacy by claiming to be descendants of Muhammad or his family; the Ottoman Sultans, however, claimed their right to rule based on their success in war and against the Christians in particular.³⁷

= ie. Koran.

94	He shall be made a chaste and <u>lustless</u> eunuch, And in my <u>sarell</u> tend my concubines;	=ie. Tamburlaine. = lacking sexual appetite. ¹ = serail or seraglio: where the women of the harem are kept. ¹
96	And all his captains that thus <u>stoutly</u> stand, Shall draw the chariot of my empress,	=haughtily. ¹⁴
98	Whom I have brought to see their overthrow.	
100	Tamb. By this my sword, that conquered Persiä, Thy <u>fall</u> shall make me famous through the world.	100: Tamburlaine vows on his sword.
102	I will not tell thee how I'll handle thee, But every common soldier of my camp	= ie. overthrow.
104	Shall smile to see thy miserable state.	
106	K. of Fess. What means the mighty Turkish emperor, To talk with one so base as Tamburlaine?	
108	K. of Mor. Ye <u>Moors</u> and valiant <u>men of Barbary</u> ,	109-110: the king addresses the men from northwest Africa (the Moors , from "Mauritians") specifically and the North Africans (men of Barbary) generally.
110	How can ye suffer these indignities?	
112	K. of Arg. <u>Leave words</u> , and let them feel your lances' points	= "let us cease this talking"; Marlowe's characters often find themselves caught up in orating instead of acting.
114	Which glided through the bowels of the Greeks.	
116	Baj. Well said, my <u>stout</u> contributory kings: Your threefold army and my <u>hugy</u> host	= magnificent or fierce. ¹ = huge.
118	Shall swallow up these base-born Persiäns.	
120	Tech. <u>Puissant</u> , renowned, and mighty Tamburlaine, Why <u>stay</u> we thus prolonging of their lives?	= powerful. = wait, delay.
122	Ther. I long to see those crowns won by our swords, That we may reign as kings of Africa.	
124	Usum. What coward would not fight for such a prize?	
126	Tamb. Fight all courageously, and be you kings; I speak it, and my words are oracles.	
128		
130	Baj. <u>Zabina</u> , mother of three braver boys	130f: Bajazeth addresses his wife Zabina .
132	Than Hercules, that in his infancy Did <u>pash</u> the jaws of serpents venomous;	131-2: Juno always hated Hercules , because he was the bastard son of her husband Jupiter. She sent two snakes to kill Hercules when he was still an infant, but Hercules managed to strangle them first. pash = crush or smash. ¹
134	Whose hands are made to <u>gripe</u> a warlike lance, Their shoulders broad for <u>cóplete</u> armour fit, Their limbs more large, and of a bigger size,	= grip. = complete is often stressed on the first syllable, as here.
136	Than all the brats <u>y-sprong</u> from <u>Typhon's</u> loins;	136: "than all the offspring of Typhon." Different myths describe Typhon , or Typhoeus, as either a hurricane or monster with a hundred heads; with Echidna (a half-woman-half-serpent), Typhon fathered a number of mythology's greatest beasts: the Nemean lion and the Lernean hydra (both of whom were later killed by Hercules), Cerberus the three-headed dog who guarded Hades, and the Sphinx (Murray, p. 249). ^{19,41}

y-sprung = ie. sprung; the *y-* prefix (which derived from the Old English *ge-* prefix) was used to emphasize the completion of an action; these prefixes had dropped out of everyday English use by the end of the 15th century, only to be employed by future poets and dramatists to add an archaistic touch to their language.¹

= ie. are grown up.

138: having finally finished exalting his sons, Bajazeth resumes addressing his wife.

chair of state = throne.

= equal or partner in marriage.¹

= another reference to the king of the gods as the dispenser of thunder and lightning.

= Tamburlaine asks Zenocrate to sit next to the Turkish empress.

= "the object that proclaims my importance or greatness", presumably meaning his crown, though he could be describing Zenocrate here too.

= "carry on a war of words" (Cunningham, p. 313),³ a variation on *manage arms* (conduct war), itself a phrase used multiple times in this play.

= recently.

167-178: throughout this speech, the Sultan tries to impress upon Tamburlaine the size of his army.

= ramparts or fortifications.²

171: "and my army (*power*) is like the many-headed hydra."

The Lernean *hydra* was a famous nine-headed monster, assigned to Hercules to kill; he found that every time he cut off one head, two new ones grew in to take its place. One can see why the arrogant Sultan might apply the characteristics of such a creature - even as you think you are destroying it, it remains at least as powerful as before - to

138 Who, when they come unto their father's age,
Will batter turrets with their manly fists; –
Sit here upon this royal chair of state,

140 And on thy head wear my imperial crown,
Until I bring this sturdy Tamburlaine
142 And all his captains bound in captive chains.

144 **Zab.** Such good success happen to Bajazeth!

146 **Tamb.** Zenocrate, the loveliest maid alive,
Fairer than rocks of pearl and precious stone,
148 The only paragon of Tamburlaine,
Whose eyes are brighter than the lamps of Heaven,
150 And speech more pleasant than sweet harmony!
That with thy looks canst clear the darkened sky,
152 And calm the rage of thundering Jupiter,

Sit down by her, adorned with my crown,
154 As if thou wert the Empress of the world.
Stir not, Zenocrate, until thou see
156 Me march victoriously with all my men,
Triumphing over him and these his kings;
158 Which I will bring as vassals to thy feet;
Till then take thou my crown, vaunt of my worth,

160 And manage words with her, as we will arms.

162 **Zeno.** And may my love the King of Persiä,
Return with victory and free from wound!

164 **Baj.** Now shalt thou feel the force of Turkish arms,
166 Which lately made all Europe quake for fear.
I have of Turks, Arabians, Moors, and Jews,
168 Enough to cover all Bithynia.
Let thousands die; their slaughtered carcasses
170 Shall serve for walls and bulwarks to the rest

And as the heads of Hydra, so my power,

172	<u>Subdued</u> , shall stand as mighty as before. <u>If they</u> should yield their necks unto the sword,	himself and his army. = conquered, brought under subjection. ¹ = ie. "if every soldier serving under me".
174	Thy soldiers' arms could not endure to strike So many blows as I have heads for thee.	174-5: the Sultan has so many soldiers that Tamburlaine's own men would collapse from exhaustion before they could slay them all.
176	Thou know'st not, <u>foolish, hardy</u> Tamburlaine,	= foolish-hardy was a term dating back to the early 16th century, obviously a combination of the separate words foolish and hardy , the latter meaning courageous or daring; interestingly, the abbreviated compound-word foolhardy first appeared much earlier, at least as far back as the early 13th century. ¹
178	What 'tis to meet me in the open field, That leave no ground for thee to march upon.	178: Bajazeth again suggests his army is so enormous that it completely carpets any available ground.
180	Tamb. Our conquering swords shall <u>marshal</u> us the way	= lead. ¹
182	We use to march upon the slaughtered foe, Trampling their bowels with our horses' hoofs; Brave horses bred on th' white Tartarian hills;	
184	My <u>camp</u> is <u>like to</u> Julius Caesar's <u>host</u> ,	= army. = like, similar to. = army.
186	That never fought but had the victory; Nor in <u>Pharsalia</u> was there such hot war,	= ie. Pharsalus in Greece, where Julius Caesar decisively defeated the army of Pompey in the climax of the civil war (49-45 B.C.).
188	As these, my followers, willingly would have. Legions of spirits <u>fleeting</u> in the air Direct our <u>bullets</u> and our weapons' points,	= floating. ⁷ = arrows and other projectiles.
190	And make <u>our</u> strokes to wound the senseless <u>lure</u> ,	190: this line has caused much head-scratching. We print the line as it appears in the octavo. Wolff alone leaves the line as is, glossing it to mean that Tamburlaine is comparing the Turks to lures; a lure (a word from falconry) is a decoy, made to look kind of like a small bird, attached to the end of a cord, and used to call young hawks. ⁷ Tamburlaine, continues Wolff, is thus suggesting that the Ottomans are no better than pieces of meat, or false men. Most editors emend our to your , and, unhappy with the line's concluding word, suggest others such as wind , air or light to take the place of lure . ^{3,4}
192	And when she sees our bloody colours spread, Then Victory <u>begins to take her flight</u> ,	= ie. "spreads her wings". ¹² = alighting.
194	<u>Resting herself</u> upon my milk-white tent. – But come, my lords, to weapons let us fall; The field is ours, the Turk, his wife and all.	194-5: Tamburlaine's final lines before exiting the stage comprise a rhyming couplet.
196	[Exit Tamburlaine with his followers.]	
198	Baj. Come, kings and bassoes, let us glut our swords, That <u>thirst to drink</u> the feeble Persians' blood.	= the swords are interestingly personified.
200	[Exit Bajazeth with his followers.]	
202		
204	Zab. Base concubine, must thou be placed by me,	

206	That am the empress of the mighty Turk?	
208	Zeno. <u>Disdainful</u> Turkess and unreverend <u>boss!</u> Call'st thou me concubine, that am betrothed Unto the great and mighty Tamburlaine?	= the object of scorn or disdain. ¹ = obese woman. ¹
210	Zab. To Tamburlaine, the great Tartarian thief!	
212	Zeno. Thou wilt repent these <u>lavish</u> words of thine,	= impetuous. ²
214	When <u>thy great basso-master</u> and thyself	= ie. Bajazeth, a sarcastic expression.
216	Must plead for mercy at his kingly feet, And sue to me to be your advocates.	216: and will beg Zenocrate to intercede on their behalf and ask for mercy from Tamburlaine.
218	Zab. And sue to thee! – I tell thee, shameless girl.	218-220: the two wives' use of thou in addressing each other is insulting and signals their respective feelings of scorn; however, Zabina's addressing her servant as thou is the normal and accepted manner in which Elizabethans addressed those of lower status than themselves.
220	Thou shalt be laundress to my waiting maid! – How lik'st thou her, <u>Ebea</u> ? – <u>Will she serve</u> ?	220: Ebea = Ebea is Zabina's maid. Will she serve = ie. "will she do?", ie. to work under Ebea as a lowly laundress.
222	Ebea. Madam, perhaps, she thinks she is <u>too fine</u> ,	= ie. too refined (to engage in manual labour).
224	But I shall turn her into other <u>weeds</u> , And make her dainty fingers fall to work.	= clothing.
226	Zeno. Hear'st thou, Anippe, how thy <u>drudge</u> doth talk? And how my slave, her mistress, menaceth?	226-7: Zenocrate implies that just as Zabina will be her (Zenocrate's) slave (drudge), Zabina's maid will be the slave of Anippe, Zenocrate's maid.
228	Both for their sauciness shall be employed To <u>dress</u> the common soldiers' meat and drink,	= prepare.
230	For we will scorn they should come near ourselves.	
232	Anip. Yet sometimes let your highness send for them To do the work my chambermaid disdains.	233: referring to the meanest possible tasks, such as emptying chamber-pots, and the like.
234	[<i>They sound [to] the battle within, <u>and stay</u>.</i>]	235: the stage direction is unclear; the instruction could be for the women to cry out, or for trumpets to play, signaling the commencement of the battle. and stay = ie. "then stop."
236	Zeno. Ye gods and <u>powers</u> that govern Persiä,	= a monosyllable here.
238	And made <u>my lordly love her</u> worthy king,	= ie. Tamburlaine. = ie. Persia's.
240	Now strengthen him against the Turkish Bajazeth, And let his foes, like flocks of fearful <u>roes</u>	= small European deer; note the intra-line rhyme.
242	Pursued by hunters, fly his angry looks, <u>That</u> I may see him <u>issue</u> conqueror!	= so that. = come out of this.
244	Zab. Now, <u>Mahomet</u> , solicit God himself, And make him rain down murdering shot from Heaven	= Mahomet will always be stressed on the first syllable: <i>MA-ho-met</i> .
246	To dash the Scythians' brains, and strike them dead, That dare to <u>manage arms</u> with him	247: the line is short, suggest something has been lost. ⁵ manage arms = conduct war.
248	<u>That</u> offered jewèls to thy sacred shrine, When first he warred against the Christiäns!	= who, meaning Bajazeth.

250		
	[<i>They sound again to the battle within.</i>]	
252	Zeno. <u>By this</u> the Turks lie weltering in their blood,	= by this time.
254	And Tamburlaine is Lord of Africa.	254: if Tamburlaine defeats Bajazeth, then Tamburlaine would take control of everything the Sultan is lord over, including most of North Africa.
256	Zab. Thou art deceived. – I heard the trumpets sound,	= ie. "the same horn call I heard".
	<u>As</u> when my emperor overthrew the Greeks,	= ie. the Turkish empire. ¹²
258	And led them captive into <u>Africa</u> .	= right away, without delay. = treat.
260	<u>Straight</u> will I <u>use</u> thee as thy pride deserves –	
	Prepare thyself to live and die my slave.	
262	Zeno. If Mahomet should come from Heaven and swear	
	My royal lord is slain or conquerèd,	
264	Yet should he not persuade me otherwise	= ie. "even he (Mahomet) could not persuade me".
	But that <u>he</u> lives and will be conqueror.	= ie. Tamburlaine.
266		
	[<i>Re-enter Bajazeth, pursued by Tamburlaine;</i>	
268	<i>they fight, and Bajazeth is overcome.</i>]	= Tamburlaine defeats Bajazeth, but does not kill him.
270	Tamb. Now, king of bassoes, who is conqueror?	
272	Baj. Thou, by the fortune of this damnèd <u>foil</u> .	= defeat. ⁷
274	Tamb. Where are your <u>stout</u> contributory kings?	= bold. ¹⁴
276	<i>Re-enter Techelles, Theridamas, and Usumcasane.</i>	
278	Tech. We have their crowns – their bodies <u>strow</u> the field.	= are strewn about. ¹
280	Tamb. Each man a crown! – Why kingly fought <u>i' faith</u> .	= in faith, ie. truly.
282	Deliver them into my treasury.	281: Timur (the real Tamburlaine) actually was particularly disposed to keeping as much loot as he could for himself; see Bartlett, p. 254. ¹¹
284	Zeno. Now let me offer to my gracious lord	
	His royal crown again so highly won.	
286	Tamb. Nay, take the crown from her, Zenocrate,	286-7: Tamburlaine means Zenocrate should hold onto the Persian crown already in her hands, but take Bajazeth's crown away from Zabina, and place that one on his head.
	And crown me Emperor of <u>Africa</u> .	Africa = ie. the Turkish Empire.
288		
	Zab. No, Tamburlaine: though now thou <u>gat the best</u> ,	= ie. "got the best of us". ¹
290	Thou shalt not yet be lord of Africa.	
292	Ther. Give her the crown, Turkess: <u>you were best</u> .	= ie. "it would be better for you."
294	[<i>He takes it from her.</i>]	
296	Zab. <u>Injurious</u> villains! – thieves! – <u>runagates</u> !	= insulting. ¹⁴ = vagabonds. ¹⁴
	How dare you thus <u>abuse my majesty</u> ?	= ie. "mistreat my sovereign person?"
298		
300	Ther. Here, madam, you are Empress; she is none.	299: Theridamas addresses Zenocrate.
302	[<i>Gives the crown to Zenocrate.</i>]	

	<p>303: <i>Not now</i> = "not anymore!" Tamburlaine agrees with Theridamas' assessment. <i>her</i> = ie. Zabina's.</p>
<p>304 The pillars that have bolstered up those <u>terms</u>, Are fall'n in clusters at my conquering feet.</p>	<p>304-5: a <i>term</i> is a statue of an upper body over a pillar from which it appears to emerge;¹ hence the lines offer a nice metaphor for the worlds of Bajazeth and Zabina crumbling at Tamburlaine's feet.</p>
<p>306 308 <i>Zab.</i> Though he be prisoner, he may be ransomed.</p>	<p>307: Zabina optimistically proposes that her husband's life be spared by paying a ransom; in English wars of the Renaissance, captives of high rank were usually held for ransom.</p>
<p>310 <i>Tamb.</i> Not all the world shall ransom Bajazeth.</p>	
<p>312 <i>Baj.</i> Ah, fair Zabina! we have lost the field; And never had the Turkish emperor So great a <u>foil</u> by any foreign foe. 314 Now will the Christian <u>miscreants</u> be glad,</p>	<p>= defeat. = originally a religious term, describing an infidel or unbeliever.¹</p>
<p>Ringling with joy their <u>superstitious</u> bells,</p>	<p>= Marlowe was wont to pejoratively refer to Roman Catholic rites and customs as <i>superstitious</i>; the Elizabethans were encouraged to disparage the Catholic church.</p>
<p>316 And making <u>bonfires</u> for my overthrow. But, ere I die, those foul idolaters 318 Shall make me bonfires with their filthy bones.</p>	<p>= a particularly interesting etymology: originally <i>bone-fire</i>, <i>bonfire</i> refers literally to the burning of bones in a great conflagration.¹ We may note that funeral pyres in which the bodies and bones of dead heroes were burned appear regularly in Greek mythology.</p>
<p>For though the glory of this day be lost, 320 Afric and Greece have garrisons enough To make me sovereign of the earth again. 322</p>	
<p>324 <i>Tamb.</i> Those wallèd garrisons will I subdue, And write myself great lord of Africa. So from the East unto the furthest West 326 Shall Tamburlaine extend his <u>puissant</u> arm.</p>	<p>= mighty.</p>
<p>The galleys and those <u>pilling brigandines</u>,</p>	<p>327-330: while not exactly clear, Tamburlaine seems to be imagining that he will order all pirate ships to collect and sit idly at the island of Zante, while his own ships sail around the world (lines 331-8). <i>pilling</i> = pillaging, plundering.³ <i>brigandines</i> = ie. brigantines, small, light and easily-maneuverable vessels used by pirates.¹</p>
<p>328 That yearly sail to the Venetian gulf,</p>	<p>= as a historical matter, even the Venetians were not immune from North African piracy.</p>
<p>And hover in <u>the Straits</u> for Christians' <u>wrack</u>,</p>	<p>329: and wait for Christian vessels to arrive, which the pirates will either: (1) await to become shipwrecked, becoming easy prey for predators, or (2) attack directly as they try to pass. If the former, then <i>wrack</i> would be equivalent to the modern word <i>wreck</i>, and if the later, <i>wreak</i>. <i>the Straits</i> = presumably meaning the Strait of Otranto,</p>

330 Shall lie at anchor in the isle Asant,

332 Until the Persian fleet and men of war,
Sailing along the oriental sea,

Have fetched about the Indian continent,

334 Even from Persepolis to Mexico,

And thence unto the straits of Jubalter;

336 Where they shall meet and join their force in one
Keeping in awe the bay of Portingale,

338 And all the ocean by the British shore;
And by this means I'll win the world at last.

340

342 **Baj.** Yet set a ransom on me, Tamburlaine.

Tamb. What, think'st thou Tamburlaine esteems thy gold?
344 I'll make the kings of India, ere I die,
Offer their mines to sue for peace to me,

346 And dig for treasure to appease my wrath. –
Come, bind them both, and one lead in the Turk;
348 The Turkess let my love's maid lead away.

350 [They bind them.]

352 **Baj.** Ah, villains!– dare you touch my sacred arms?
O Mahomet! – O sleepy Mahomet!

354 **Zab.** O cursèd Mahomet, that mak'st us thus
356 The slaves to Scythians rude and barbarous!

358 **Tamb.** Come, bring them in; and for this happy conquest,
Triumph and solemnise a martial feast.

360 [Exeunt.]

END OF ACT III.

which separates Italy and Greece.

= modern Zakynthos, or Zante, a large island off the west coast of Greece.⁶

332-8: Tamburlaine describes the Persian fleet sailing around the world in an easterly direction.

oriental sea = from the context, the **oriental sea** should refer to the Indian Ocean; Ortelius' map of Asia, however, identifies the Pacific Ocean by the name of *Oceanvs Orientalis*.

333: ie. have sailed around India.

334: ie. across the Pacific (Ribner). **Mexico** is an obvious anachronism, as Columbus would not sail to the Americas for almost another century.

335: "and from there, (across the Atlantic and) to the Straits of Gibraltar (**Jubalter**).

337: **Keeping in awe** = controlling through intimidation.^{1,12}
the bay of Portingale = **Portingale** is Portugal, but there is no such bay; as Marlowe is laying out a south-to-north catalogue of oceanic locations (lines 335-8), Ellis suggests he may be referring to the Bay of Biscay, located off the northern shore of Spain.

344-5: in 1398-9, before he took his army west to Asia Minor, Tamburlaine did cross the Indus River and conquer a small portion of India, destroying the city of Delhi.
ere = before.

= ie. by paying him off.

= lethargic: a word of regret, or even reproach, over the disappointing failure of the Prophet to help them.

= felicitous, gratifying.
= exult.²

ACT IV.

SCENE I.

[Egypt.]

*Enter the Soldan of Egypt, Capolin, Lords,
and a Messenger.*

1 **Sold.** Awake, ye men of Memphis! – hear the clang
2 Of Scythian trumpets! – hear the basilisks,

That, roaring, shake Damascus' turrets down!
4 The rogue of Volga holds Zenocrate,
The Soldan's daughter, for his concubine,
6 And with a troop of thieves and vagabonds,
Hath spread his colours to our high disgrace,

8 While you, faint-hearted, base Egyptians,
Lie slumbering on the flowery banks of Nile,
10 As crocodiles that unaffrighted rest,
While thundering cannons rattle on their skins.

12 **Mess.** Nay, mighty Soldan, did your greatness see
14 The frowning looks of fiery Tamburlaine,
That with his terror and imperious eyes,
16 Commands the hearts of his associates,
It might amaze your royal majesty.

18 **Sold.** Villain, I tell thee, were that Tamburlaine
20 As monstrous as Gorgon, prince of hell,

The Soldan would not start a foot from him.
22 But speak, what power hath he?

24 **Mess.** Mighty lord,
Three hundred thousand men in armour clad,
26 Upon their prancing steeds disdainfully,
With wanton paces trampling on the ground:
28 Five hundred thousand footmen threatening shot,

Shaking their swords, their spears, and iron bills,

Scene I: having defeated the Ottomans, Tamburlaine has moved east to Syria, and is now besieging Damascus.

At the time of the invasion of the Levant by Timur (the real Tamburlaine), Syria was ruled by Egypt; we may also observe that Timur's real-life Syrian campaign occurred in early 1401, before he defeated the Ottomans.

Entering Characters: Egypt around 1400 was ruled by a Sultan (here **Soldan**) of the Burji Mamluk dynasty. The real Soldan at the time of Tamburlaine's siege of Damascus was only about 14 years old.⁸

Capolin is one of the Egyptian military commanders.

= immense cannons, so named because of their resemblance to the fabled and deadly serpent-like creature of the same name.

= the Soldan speaks of himself in the third person.

7: **his colours** = ie. Tamburlaine's banners or standards.
to our high disgrace = ie. because Tamburlaine has without impediment invaded the Soldan's own lands and invested his own city of Damascus.

= like.

= should.

= commanding.

20: **monstrous** = a trisyllable here: *MON-ster-ous*.

Gorgon = ie. Demogorgon, a terrible demon of the underworld.¹

= ie. jump from being startled or frightened.
= "tell me". = "what size and type of army".

= merciless or reckless.¹

= ie. the shooting of missiles such as arrows.

= a **bill** was a medieval infantry weapon, comprised of a pole with a hook (for unseating cavalry) and one or more spikes at the end.²³

<p>30</p> <p>32</p> <p>34</p> <p>36</p> <p>38</p> <p>40</p> <p>42</p> <p>44</p> <p>46</p> <p>48</p> <p>50</p> <p>52</p> <p>54</p> <p>56</p> <p>58</p> <p>60</p> <p>62</p> <p>64</p> <p>66</p>	<p><u>Environing their standard round</u>, that stood As bristle-pointed as a thorny wood:</p> <p>Their warlike <u>engines</u> and <u>munitiön</u></p> <p>Exceed the forces of their martial men.</p> <p>Sold. Nay, <u>could</u> their numbers <u>countervail</u> the stars, Or ever-drizzling drops of <u>April showers</u>,</p> <p>Or withered leaves that Autumn shaketh down, Yet would the Soldan by his conquering power So scatter and consume them in his rage, That not a man should live to rue their fall.</p> <p>Capo. So might your highness, had you time to <u>sort</u> Your fighting men, and raise your royal <u>host</u>; But Tamburlaine, by <u>expeditiön</u>, Advantage takes of your unreadiness.</p> <p>Sold. Let him take all th' advantages he can. Were all the world conspired to fight for him, Nay, were he devil, as he is no man, Yet in revenge of fair Zenocrate, Whom he detaineth in despite of us, This arm should send him down to <u>Erebus</u>, To shroud his shame in darkness of the night.</p> <p>Mess. Pleaseth your mightiness to understand, His resolution far exceedeth all. The first day when he pitcheth down his tents,</p> <p>White is their hue, and on his silver crest, A snowy feather <u>spangled</u> white he bears, To signify the mildness of his mind, That, satiate with spoil, refuseth blood.</p> <p>But when Aurora mounts the second time As red as scarlet <u>is his furniture</u>; Then must his kindled wrath be quenched with blood, Not sparing any that can <u>manage arms</u>;</p> <p>But if these threats <u>move not submissiön</u>, Black are his colours, black <u>paviliön</u>;</p>	<p>30-31: the image is of a mass of men all holding their pole- weapons outward at various angles, the effect resembling a hedgehog. environing...round = "surrounding their banner".</p> <p>32: engines = large machines of war, such as catapults. munitiön = large ordinance, artillery.²⁴</p> <p>= ie. "even if". = equal.¹ = the phrase April showers has a lengthy pedigree, first appearing in the opening line of Chaucer's <i>Canterbury Tales</i>: "<i>Whan that Aprille with his shoures soote...</i>"</p> <p>= possibly meaning "arm" (OED, def. 15 of sort, vb. 1). = army. = having moved quickly.</p> <p>= personified Darkness, son of Chaos; Erebus represents the dark space souls travel through to get from the earth's surface to Hades.¹⁹</p> <p>57f: the Messenger explains Tamburlaine's <i>modus operandi</i> for investing a city.</p> <p>= speckled.¹</p> <p>57-61: on the first day of a siege, Tamburlaine's tents and accoutrements are white: if the town surrenders to him on this day, its citizens will suffer no harm.</p> <p>62: ie. "but on the second morning"; Aurora is the goddess of the dawn. = ie. "are his tents, dress and banners".</p> <p>65: he will kill only those who wield weapons (manage arms),¹⁴ ie. soldiers. Thomas Fortescue, the author of Marlowe's source for the play, <i>The Collection of Histories</i> (1571), wrote that if a city submitted on the second day, Tamburlaine would only "<i>execute the officers, magistrates, masters of households, and governors, pardoning and forgiving all others whatsoever.</i>"</p> <p>= fail to convince the city to surrender. = ceremonial tent.²</p>
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68	His spear, his shield, his horse, his armour, plumes, And <u>jetty</u> feathers, menace death and hell!	= black.
70	Without respect of sex, <u>degree</u> , or age,	= rank. ¹⁴
72	He razeth all his foes with fire and sword.	66-71: any town that does not submit before the third day can expect to be wiped out completely, every man, woman and child slain.
74	Sold. Merciless villain! – peasant, ignorant Of <u>lawful arms</u> or martial discipline!	= the laws of arms, ie. the code of conduct which governed honourable warfare.
76	Pillage and murder are his usual trades. The slave usurps the glorious name of war. <u>See</u> , Capolin, <u>the fair Arabian king</u> ,	77: See = an imperative: "see to it that". the fair Arabian king = ie. Alcidamas, who had been promised to marry Zenocrate.
78	That hath been disappointed by this slave	
80	Of my fair daughter, and his princely love, May have fresh <u>warning</u> to go war <u>with us</u> , And be revenged for her <u>disparagement</u> .	= notice. ¹ = in alliance with. = dishonour. ¹
82		
	[<i>Exeunt.</i>]	
	<u>ACT IV, SCENE II.</u>	
	[<i>Outside Damascus' walls.</i>]	
	<i>Enter Tamburlaine, Techelles, Theridamas, Usumcasane, Zenocrate, Anippe, two Moors drawing Bajazeth in a cage, and Zabina following him.</i>	
1	Tamb. Bring out my footstool.	
2		
4	[<i>Bajazeth is taken out of the cage.</i>]	
6	Baj. Ye holy priests of heavenly Mahomet, That, sacrificing, slice and cut your flesh, Staining his altars with your purple blood;	5-7: Marlowe, through Bajazeth, seems to be suggesting that Islamic animal sacrifice represents the sacrificing of the Prophet himself, just as Christian Communion represents the consuming of Christ's flesh and blood; Muslims, however, only sacrificed animals as a means of thanking Allah for his bounty.
8	Make Heaven to frown and every <u>fixèd star</u>	= the night-sky's fixed stars may be contrasted with the planets, which Marlowe refers to in his works as wandering or erring stars , since they appear in a different part of the sky each night.
10	To suck up poison from the moorish <u>fens</u> , And pour it in this <u>glorious</u> tyrant's throat!	= marshland. = boastful. ³
12	Tamb. The chiefest God, first mover of that sphere, Enchased with thousands ever-shining lamps,	12-13: another reference to the single crystal sphere containing all the fixed stars which revolves around the earth.
14	Will sooner burn the glorious <u>frame of Heaven</u> ,	= a common image of the universe, or any part of it, as a

16 Than it should so conspire my overthrow.
 But, villain! thou that wishest this to me,
 Fall prostrate on the low disdainful earth,

18 And be the footstool of great Tamburlaine,
 That I may rise into my royal throne.

20
 22 **Baj.** First shalt thou rip my bowels with thy sword,
 And sacrifice my soul to death and hell,
 Before I yield to such a slavery.

24
 26 **Tamb.** Base villain, vassal, slave to Tamburlaine!
 Unworthy to embrace or touch the ground,
 That bears the honour of my royal weight;
 28 Stoop, villain, stoop! – Stoop! for so he bids

30 That may command thee piecemeal to be torn,
 Or scattered like the lofty cedar trees
Strook with the voice of thundering Jupiter.

32
 34 **Baj.** Then, as I look down to the damnèd fiends,
 Fiends look on me! and thou, dread god of hell,
 With ebon sceptre strike this hateful earth,
 36 And make it swallow both of us at once!

38 [Tamburlaine steps upon him to mount his throne.]

40 **Tamb.** Now clear the triple region of the air,
 And let the majesty of Heaven behold
 42 Their scourge and terror tread on emperors.

44 Smile stars, that reigned at my nativity,
 And dim the brightness of your neighbour lamps!

structure.¹

= Wolff interprets this to mean that "the earth is disdainful of Bajazeth but proud of bearing up Tamburlaine" (p. 239).¹³

28: Dyce asks us to consider whether one more **Stoop** should be added to the line to correct the meter; however, the word **stoop** would be emphasized (ie. stressed) everywhere it appears - this is just normal English. So, the dash likely indicates an intended *pause*, which replaces the unstressed beat between the pair of **stoops** that surround it - in other words, the line is indeed correct as written.

= into pieces.

31: ie. which have been struck by lightning. Jupiter, the king of the gods, is evoked in his role as controller of thunder and lightning.

Strook = struck, a common alternate form.

= ie. the demons of hell.

= ie. Pluto, the god of hell.

= ebony, ie. the hard, black wood.

38: in one of the most famous images of Elizabethan drama, Bajazeth, the Sultan of the Ottomans, is reduced by the mighty Tamburlaine to the status of a piece of furniture.

40-65: in this his first major play, Marlowe packs into this single speech references to a number of cosmological beliefs and images of the sky and universe to which he will return repeatedly in his subsequent works.

40-42: medieval cosmology understood that **the earth is surrounded by a region of air**, which itself is then immediately surrounded by a region or layer of fire (it is above the fire layer that the spheres of the universe are found). Tamburlaine is imagining removing the region of air, so that Heaven and its inhabitants can clearly witness how he exults over his defeated foes.

the triple region of the air = the **layer of air** was imagined to be **composed of three layers**; the lowest region, which adjoins the earth, is of moderate temperature; here live the birds and the beasts. The middle region was thought to be very cold, and the highest region, exceedingly hot, because it is in direct contact with the region of fire.

= the octavo prints **their**, emended to **your** by Dyce.

	Disdain to borrow light <u>of Cynthia!</u>	= "from Cynthia", <i>Cynthia</i> being the personification of the moon.
46	For I, the chiefest lamp of all the earth, First rising in the East with mild <u>aspéct</u> ,	46: Tamburlaine compares himself to the sun, or perhaps suggests his light is greater than that of the sun. 47: the line has a double meaning, the second being astrological: (1) Tamburlaine of course came from the east - like the sun - and originally had a mild countenance or appearance (<i>aspect</i>); (2) <i>aspect</i> also can refer to the position of the heavenly bodies, and hence <i>mild aspect</i> suggests "benign disposition".
48	But <u>fixèd</u> now in <u>the meridian line</u> ,	48: Tamburlaine, continuing to imagine himself as the sun, asserts he has now reached the peak, or "noon", ¹² of his fortunes, metaphorically symbolized by <i>the meridian line</i> , a line (a great circle around the earth, properly) of longitude (north-south) across which the sun passes at noon at a given location (ie. when it is at its highest point). ^{1,25} Unlike the real sun, though, Tamburlaine's position is fixed, ie. neither he nor his fortune shall decline. ¹²
	Will send up <u>fire</u> to your turning spheres,	= <i>fire</i> is disyllabic here and in line 51.
50	And cause the sun to borrow light <u>of you</u> .	= "from you", with extra stress perhaps on <i>you</i> (<i>you</i> being the stars); Tamburlaine's point seems to be that his brightness will so outshine that of the sun that it will have to borrow light from the stars, which had received extra light from Tamburlaine.
	My sword struck fire from his coat of steel, Even in Bithynia, when I took this Turk; As when a <u>fiery exhalatiön</u> ,	= meteor: meteors were thought to form out of ignited vapours from the earth.
54	Wrapt in the bowels of a freezing cloud Fighting for passage, make[s] the <u>welkin</u> crack,	= sky.
56	And casts a flash of lightning to the earth: But <u>ere</u> I march to wealthy Persiä,	= ere.
58	Or leave Damascus and th' Egyptian fields, As was the <u>fame</u> of <u>Clymene's</u> brain-sick <u>son</u> ,	59-60: the reference is to the well-known and oft-referred to story of Phaeton, the <i>son</i> of <i>Clymene</i> and the sun god Helios: as an adolescent, Phaeton begged his father to let him drive the chariot that pulled the sun across the sky for one day. After much pleading, Helios reluctantly acquiesced, but warned his son to be careful. Phaeton could not control the horses, and would have crashed onto the earth, burning it, had not Zeus killed him first with a thunderbolt.
60	That almost <u>brent</u> the <u>axle-tree of Heaven</u> ,	<i>fame</i> = the context suggests "story", ¹² but the usage is unusual. <i>brent</i> = burnt. ³ <i>axle-tree of Heaven</i> = the axis around which the earth rotates and the spheres of the universe revolve.
	So shall our swords, our lances, and our shot Fill all the air with fiery meteors:	61-62: Tamburlaine compares the visual impact of his army saturating the air with weapons and projectiles during its anticipated attack on Damascus to the terrifying meteorological display that he imagines accompanied Phaeton as he dragged the sun directly toward the earth.
	Then when the sky shall <u>wax</u> as red as blood	= grow.

64	It shall be said I made it red myself, To make me think of <u>nought</u> but blood and war.	= nothing.
66	Zab. Unworthy king, that by thy cruëlty Unlawfully usurp'st the Persian seat, Dar'st thou that never saw an emperor 70 Before thou met my husband in the field, Being thy captive, thus <u>abuse his state</u> , 72 Keeping his kingly body in a cage, <u>That</u> roofs of gold and sun-bright palaces 74 Should have prepared to entertain his grace? And treading him beneath thy loathsome feet, 76 <u>Whose feet</u> the kings of Africa have kissed?	= mistreat his greatness or his royal person. = ie. "for whom". = referring to the feet of Bajazeth.
78	Tech. You must devise some torment worse, my lord. To make these captives rein their <u>lavish</u> tongues.	= uncontrolled. ²
80	Tamb. Zenocrate, look better to your slave.	= this line can be imagined to be spoken drolly,
82	Zeno. She is my handmaid's slave, and she shall look 84 That these abuses flow not from her tongue: – Chide her, Anippe.	
86	Anip. Let these be warnings for you then, my slave, 88 How you abuse the person of the king; Or else I swear to have you whipt, <u>stark-naked</u> .	= this still-current phrase actually dates back at least as far as 1390, and was used by Shakespeare in <i>Antony and Cleopatra</i> and <i>Twelfth Night</i> .
90	Baj. Great Tamburlaine, great in my overthrow, 92 Ambitious pride shall make thee fall as low, For treading on the back of Bajazeth, 94 That should be <u>horsèd on</u> four mighty kings.	= "mounted on", although "pulled by" might make more sense.
96	Tamb. Thy names, and titles, and thy <u>dignities</u> Are fled from Bajazeth and remain with me, 98 <u>That</u> will <u>maintain it</u> 'gainst a world of kings. – Put him in again.	96-97: Tamburlaine has taken possession of Bajazeth's titles and offices (<i>dignities</i>). ¹ = who. = ie. "defend them".
100	[<i>They put him back into the cage.</i>]	
102	Baj. Is this a place for mighty Bajazeth? 104 <u>Confusion</u> light on him that helps thee thus!	= ruin.
106	Tamb. There, whiles he lives, shall Bajazeth be kept; And, where I go, be thus in triumph <u>drawn</u> ; 108 And thou, his wife, shalt feed him with the scraps My <u>servitors</u> shall bring thee from my <u>board</u> ; – 110 For he that gives him other food than this, Shall sit by him and starve to death himself; 112 This is my mind and I will have it so. Not all the kings and emperors of the earth, 114 If they would lay their crowns before my feet, Shall ransom him, or take him from his cage. 116 The ages that shall talk of Tamburlaine,	= pulled. = servants. = table. ²

<p>118 Shall talk how I have handled Bajazeth; 120 These Moors, that drew him from Bithynia, 122 To fair Damascus, where we now <u>remain</u>, 124 Shall lead him with us wheresoe'er we go. – Techelles, and my loving followers, Now may we see Damascus' lofty towers, Like to the shadows of <u>Pyramides</u>,</p> <p>That with their beauties grace the <u>Memphian fields</u>:</p> <p>126 The golden <u>stature</u> of their feathered bird, That spreads her wings upon the city's walls, 128 Shall not defend it from our battering shot: The townsmen <u>mask</u> in silk and cloth of gold,</p> <p>130 And every house is as a treasury: The men, the treasure, and the town is ours. 132 Ther. Your tents of white now pitched before the gates, 134 And gentle flags of amity displayed, I doubt not but the governor will yield, 136 Offering Damascus to your majesty.</p> <p>138 Tamb. So shall he have his life and <u>all the rest</u>: But if he <u>stay</u> until the bloody flag 140 Be once advanced on my <u>vermilion</u> tent, He dies, and those that kept us out so long, 142 And when they see us march in black array, With mournful <u>streamers hanging down their heads</u>,</p> <p>144 <u>Were</u> in that city all the world contained, Not one should 'scape, but perish by our swords. 146 Zeno. Yet would you have some pity for my sake, 148 Because it is my country's, and my father's.</p> <p>150 Tamb. Not for the world, Zenocrate, if I have sworn. Come; bring in the Turk. 152</p>	<p>117: briefly, "forever". <i>Plato's wondrous year</i>, or <i>perfect year</i>, refers to the cycle of time it takes for the revolving spheres of planets and stars to simultaneously return to their original position;²⁶ today the <i>Great Year</i> or <i>Platonic Year</i> is used to describe the amount of time it takes for the equinoxes to complete their revolution, about 25,800 years.^{1,6}</p> <p>= "sit" or "are".</p> <p>124: "which stand like images or reflections of the <i>Pyramids</i> of Egypt"; Schelling notes that <i>pyramides</i> could also refer to obelisks. <i>Pyramides</i> is pronounced with four syllables, the stress on the second: <i>py-Ra-mi-des</i>.</p> <p>= the fields of Memphis, or Egypt.¹⁵</p> <p>126: allusion to the ibis, Egypt's sacred bird. <i>stature</i> = statue, a common alternate form.¹</p> <p>= <i>to mask</i> usually means "to disguise (oneself)", but from the context, Bevington suggests simply "dress". There was also a rarer use of <i>mask</i> to mean "wander around aimlessly".¹</p> <p>130: ie. the Damascenes are all wealthy.</p> <p>= "everyone else's lives will also be spared." = delays, waits. = red, the color of Tamburlaine's tents and banners on the second day of a siege.</p> <p>142: ie. "and on the third day of the siege".</p> <p>143: <i>streamers</i> = long, narrow flags, ie. pennants.¹⁵ <i>hanging...heads</i> = ie. hanging limply, as a person might hang his or her head.</p> <p>= even if.</p> <p>150: ie. "once I have vowed to do something, I would not change my mind for the world."</p>
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[Exeunt.]

ACT IV, SCENE III.

[Somewhere on the march to Damascus.]

*Enter the Soldan, the King of Arabia, Capolin,
and Soldiers with colours flying.*

1 **Sold.** Methinks we march as Meleäger did,
2 Environèd with brave Argolian knights,
To chase the savage Calydonian boar,

4 Or Cephalus with lusty Theban youths
Against the wolf that angry Themis sent
6 To waste and spoil the sweet Aonian fields,

A monster of five hundred thousand heads,
8 Compact of rapine, piracy, and spoil.
The scum of men, the hate and scourge of God,
10 Raves in Egyptia and annoyeth us.

My lord, it is the bloody Tamburlaine,

12 A sturdy felon and a base-bred thief,

By murder raisèd to the Persian crown,
14 That dares control us in our territories.
To tame the pride of this presumptuous beast,
16 Join your Arabians with the Soldan's power,
Let us unite our royal bands in one,
18 And hasten to remove Damascus' siege.
It is a blemish to the majesty
20 And high estate of mighty emperors,
That such a base usurping vagabond
22 Should brave a king, or wear a princely crown.

24 **K. of Arab.** Renowmèd Soldan, have ye lately heard

Scene III: the Egyptian army, led by the Soldan, is on the road to Syria to meet and defeat Tamburlaine, and relieve the city of Damascus.

Entering Characters: the **King of Arabia** is Alcidas, Zenocrate's original betrothed. **Capolin** is an Egyptian military commander.

1-3: allusion to the most famous hunt of antiquity, the hunt for the **Calydonian boar**, a monstrous animal which terrorized the countryside of Aetolia, on the southern coast of central Greece. The hunt was led by **Meleager**, the son of the King of Calydon, and many of the greatest heroes of Greece, such as Theseus, Jason, and Peleus took part.

Argolian knights = those hunters who came from **Argos**, on the Peloponnesus. The term **knights** is of course anachronistic.

4-6: In Book VII of the *Metamorphoses*, Ovid tells the tale of a monster hunted by **Cephalus** and the other youth of the city of **Thebes**. As he was about to release his javelin at the fiend, Cephalus saw the monster and his dog, which was closely pursuing it, turned to marble (Humphries, pp. 177-8).²²

lusty = vigorous.

Themis is the personification of the state of order, as set by law and custom.¹⁹

Aonian = **Aonia** was the area of Greece around Thebes, in the district of Boeotia in central Greece.³⁸

7: Tamburlaine's army is compared to a hunted monster, but one comprised of a half-million heads, or soldiers. = allied in.² = rape.

10 **Raves** = could mean either "rages" or "wanders".^{1,14}
us = ie. "me", the royal "we".

= the Soldan is addressing his prospective son-in-law, the King of Arabia.

12: **sturdy** = fierce, cruel or uncompromising.^{1,2}
base-bred = ie. born out of wedlock.¹

= crowns or diadems.

= raise.

= condition or status.¹

= defy.

= ie. renowned.

26	The overthrow of mighty Bajazeth <u>About the confines</u> of Bithynia?	= in the region. = ie. Tamburlaine.
28	The slavery wherewith <u>he</u> persecutes The noble Turk and his great emperess?	
30	Sold. I have, and sorrow for his <u>bad success</u> ; But noble lord of great Arabia,	= misfortune. ¹
32	Be so persuaded that the Soldan is No more dismayed with <u>tidings</u> of <u>his</u> fall,	= news. = ie. Bajazeth's.
34	Than in the haven when the pilot stands,	34: ie. "than the pilot of a ship who stands in the safety of the harbour".
36	And views a <u>stranger's</u> ship <u>rent</u> in the winds, And <u>shiverèd</u> against a craggy rock;	= foreigner's. = torn apart. = smashed.
38	Yet in compassion to his wretched <u>state</u> , A sacred vow to Heaven and him I make,	= condition.
40	Confirming it with <u>Ibis'</u> <u>holy name</u> , That Tamburlaine shall rue the day, the hour,	= another reference to Egypt's sacred bird.
42	Wherein he wrought such ignominious wrong Unto the hallowed person of a prince,	
44	Or kept the fair Zenocrate so long As concubine, I fear, to feed his lust.	
46	K. of Arab. Let grief and fury hasten on revenge; Let Tamburlaine for his offences feel	
48	Such plagues as Heaven and we can pour on him. I long to break my spear upon his crest,	
50	And <u>prove</u> the <u>weight of his victorious arm</u> ; For <u>Fame</u> , I fear, hath been <u>too prodigal</u>	= test. = metaphorically, "the strength of his army." = Fame is personified. = overly generous. ²
52	In <u>sounding</u> through the world his <u>partial</u> praise.	= proclaiming, broadcasting. = biased. ¹⁴
54	Sold. Capolin, hast thou surveyèd our powers?	
56	Capo. Great Emperors of Egypt and Arabia, The number of your hosts united is	
58	A <u>hundred</u> and fifty thousand horse; Two hundred thousand foot, brave men-at-arms,	= hundred is likely tri-syllabic here: <i>HUN-der-ed</i> .
60	Courageöus, and full of hardiness, As <u>frolic</u> as the hunters in the chase	= merry. ²
62	Of savage beasts amid the <u>desert</u> woods.	= desolate. ² We may note here that the Soldan's combined forces number less than half of Tamburlaine's estimated 800,000 soldiers reported to the Soldan in Act IV.i.24-31.
64	K. of Arab. My mind <u>presageth</u> fortunate success; – And Tamburlaine, my spirit doth foresee	= predicts.
66	The utter ruin of thy men and thee.	
68	Sold. Then <u>rear</u> your standards; let your sounding drums Direct our soldiers to Damascus' walls. –	= raise.
70	Now, Tamburlaine, the mighty Soldan comes, And leads with him the great Arabian king,	
72	To dim thy baseness and obscurity,	72: ie. "to cause you, who are base and obscure (a sneering reference to Tamburlaine's low birth), to be forgotten"; in using dim , the Soldan implicitly alludes to Tamburlaine's own description of himself as "the chiefest lamp of all the earth" (Act IV.ii.46).
	Famous for nothing but for theft and spoil;	

74 To raze and scatter thy inglorious crew
Of Scythians and slavish Persians.

76

[*Exeunt.*]

ACT IV, SCENE IV.

[*Outside the walls of Damascus.*]

*A Banquet set out; to it come Tamburlaine,
all in scarlet, Zenocrate, Theridamas, Techelles,
Usumcasane, Bajazeth in his cage, Zabina,
and others.*

1 **Tamb.** Now hang our bloody colours by Damascus,
2 Reflexing hues of blood upon their heads,
3 While they walk quivering on their city walls,
4 Half dead for fear before they feel my wrath.
5 Then let us freely banquet and carouse
6 Full bowls of wine unto the god of war
7 That means to fill your helmets full of gold,
8 And make Damascus' spoils as rich to you,
As was to Jason Colchos' golden fleece. –

10 And now, Bajazeth, hast thou any stomach?

12 **Baj.** Ay, such a stomach, cruel Tamburlaine, as I
could willingly feed upon thy blood-raw heart.

14

15 **Tamb.** Nay, thine own is easier to come by; pluck
16 out that: and 'twill serve thee and thy wife: – Well,
Zenocrate, Techelles, and the rest, fall to your victuals.

18

19 **Baj.** Fall to, and never may your meat digest!
20 Ye Furies, that can mask invisible,

21 Dive to the bottom of Avernus' pool,
22 And in your hands bring hellish poison up
And squeeze it in the cup of Tamburlaine! –
24 Or, wingèd snakes of Lerna, cast your stings,
And leave your venoms in this tyrant's dish!

26

27 **Zab.** And may this banquet prove as ominous
28 As Progne's to th' adulterous Thracian king,

Scene IV: a day has passed since we last met Tamburlaine, at which time his tents, costume and banners were benign white. Today they are red.

Entering Characters: the invaders feast as they wait for the Damascenes to decide if they will surrender the city or not.

all in scarlet = dressed completely in bright red cloth.

= red.

= ie. casting shades of red. = ie. the city's citizens'.

= who.

9: the **golden fleece** was that of a ram which had been sacrificed to Jove, and hung in **Colchis**, a kingdom located on the eastern shore of the Black Sea. The fleece was captured by **Jason** and his band of Argonauts, so named for the ship they sailed on, the *Argo*.

= appetite; lines 10-17 are in prose.

= an imperative: "eat."

20: **Ye Furies** = Bajazeth addresses the goddesses who torment the guilty.

mask = either "wander while invisible" or "make themselves invisible".^{1,14}

= a second allusion in the play to the lake at the entrance to Hades.

24-25: Bajazeth now prays to mythology's infamous hydra.

Lerna was a region of springs and marshes in the Peloponnese, and the home of the hydra, or "water-snake" with nine heads, which Hercules slew. The hydra's bile was poisonous.¹⁹

27-29: the allusion is to the gruesome mythological story of Tereus, the king of **Thrace**, who violently raped

<p>That fed upon the substance of his child.</p> <p>30</p> <p>32 Zeno. My lord, how can you <u>suffer</u> these Outrageous curses by these slaves of yours?</p> <p>34 Tamb. To let them see, divine Zenocrate, I glory in the curses of my foes, 36 Having the power from the imperial Heaven To turn them all upon their <u>proper</u> heads.</p> <p>38</p> <p>40 Tech. <u>I pray you give them leave</u>, madam; this speech is a goodly refreshing to them.</p> <p>42 Ther. But if his highness would let them be fed, it would do them more good.</p> <p>44</p> <p>46 Tamb. <u>Sirrah, why fall you not to?</u> – are you so daintily brought up, you cannot eat your own flesh?</p> <p>48</p> <p>50 Usum. Villain, know'st thou to whom thou speakest?</p> <p>52 Tamb. O, let him alone. – Here; eat, sir; take it from my sword's point, or I'll thrust it to thy heart.</p> <p>54</p> <p>56 <i>[Bajazeth takes it and stamps upon it.]</i></p> <p>58 Ther. He stamps it under his feet, my lord.</p> <p>60 Tamb. Take it up, villain, and eat it; or I will make thee slice the <u>brawns</u> of thy arms into <u>carbonadoes</u> and eat them.</p> <p>62</p> <p>64 Usum. Nay, 'twere better he killed his wife, and then she shall be sure not to be starved, and he be provided for a month's victual beforehand.</p> <p>66</p> <p>68 Tamb. Here is my dagger: <u>despatch</u> her while she is fat, for if she live but a while longer, she will fall into a <u>consumption</u> with fretting, and then she will not be</p>	<p>Philomena, the sister of his wife Procne. Tereus cut out Philomena's tongue to keep her from telling anyone what happened, and kept her locked in a shed. Philomena famously weaved her story onto a cloth, which she then was able to pass on to a friend. When Procne, who had been told by Tereus that her sister was dead, learned the truth, she, in revenge, cooked and fed Itys, her son by Tereus, to Tereus. As Tereus chased the girls with murderous intent, the gods transformed them into birds - Philomena a nightingale, and Procne a swallow. (Humphries, 143-151).^{19,22}</p> <p>= tolerate.</p> <p>37: "to turn their curses back onto their own (<i>proper</i>) heads."</p> <p>= "please, give them permission (to continue speaking in this vein". 39-93: the conversation with and about Bajazeth is in prose.</p> <p>45: Sirrah = a contemptuous term of address, directed at Bajazeth. why fall you not to = "why haven't you begun to eat yet?" Tamburlaine refers in this speech to his suggestion at lines 15-16 that the Sultan pull out and consume his own heart. Notice Tamburlaine speaks with mock formality, addressing Bajazeth as you.</p> <p>52-53: Tamburlaine offers some meat or other food to Bajazeth.</p> <p>= flesh or muscles.¹ = small pieces of flesh, for grilling.³</p> <p>63-65: rare humour is shown in Usumcasane's joke about Zabina's obesity, as well as Tamburlaine's response.</p> <p>67-70: Tamburlaine cruelly pretends to offer his dagger to Bajazeth. despatch = kill.</p> <p>= wasting disease.</p>
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70	worth the eating.	
72	Ther. Dost thou think that Mahomet will <u>suffer</u> this?	72: Theridamas joins in the taunting, mocking Bajazeth for his repeated but ineffective avowals that Mahomet will help him. <i>suffer</i> = permit.
74	Tech. 'Tis like he will when he cannot <u>let</u> it.	74: ie. "it is likely Mahomet will indeed tolerate this abuse, since he is not able to prevent it!" ⁵ <i>let</i> = hinder.
76	Tamb. <u>Go to</u> ; fall to your meat. – What, not a bit!	= "get on with it!"
78	<u>Belike</u> he hath not been <u>watered</u> today; give him some drink.	77: Belike = it is likely. <i>watered</i> = the editors all note how <i>water</i> as a verb was reserved to describe giving water to domesticated animals, especially horses and cattle (hence making its use for Bajazeth extra insulting), but the OED observes that the application of "to water" for people was not unusual.
80	[<i>They give Bajazeth water to drink, and he flings it upon the ground.</i>]	
82	<u>Fast</u> , and welcome, sir, <u>while</u> hunger make you eat. –	= starve. = until. ⁵
84	How now, Zenocrate, do not the Turk and his wife make a goodly show at a banquet?	
86	Zeno. Yes, my lord.	87: Zenocrate's brief and <i>pro forma</i> response belies her depressed and pensive mood, which Tamburlaine finally notices. ¹²
88	Ther. Methinks, 'tis a great deal better than a consort of music.	89-90: consort of music = company of musicians playing together, or a playing or singing in harmony. ¹
90	Tamb. Yet music would do well to cheer up Zenocrate. Pray thee, tell, why thou art so sad? – If thou wilt have a song, <u>the Turk shall strain his voice</u> . But why is it?	= ie. "we will make Bajazeth sing for you."
92	Zeno. My lord, to see my father's town besieged, The country wasted where myself was born, How can it but afflict my very soul? If any love remain in you, my lord, Or if my love unto your majesty May merit favour at your highness' hands, Then raise your siege from fair Damascus' walls, And with my father take a friendly truce.	96ff: the play returns to verse, abandoning the jolly bantering of the prose.
94	Tamb. Zenocrate, were Egypt Jove's own land, Yet would I with my sword make Jove to <u>stoop</u> .	= bow down or submit. ²
96	I will <u>confute</u> those blind geographers	= rebut, prove wrong. ¹
98	That make a triple region in the world,	108: the ancients divided the world into three continents, Europe, Asia and Libya (Africa), surrounded by ocean.
100	Excluding regions which I mean to <u>trace</u> ,	109-110: which I...map = Tamburlaine speaks with double meaning: (1) literally, he intends to chart (<i>trace</i>) those lands that have been left off of earlier maps and add them onto those maps; ¹² and
102	And with <u>this pen</u> reduce them to a map,	
104		
106		
108		
110		

112 Calling the provinces, cities, and towns,
 After my name and thine, Zenocrate.
 Here at Damascus will I make the point
 114 That shall begin the perpendicular;

And would'st thou have me buy thy father's love
 116 With such a loss? – Tell me, Zenocrate.

118 **Zeno.** Honour still wait on happy Tamburlaine;
 Yet give me leave to plead for him, my lord.
 120

Tamb. Content thyself: his person shall be safe,
 122 And all the friends of fair Zenocrate,
 If with their lives they may be pleased to yield,
 124 Or may be forced to make me Emperor;
 For Egypt and Arabia must be mine. –
 126 Feed, you slave; thou may'st think thyself happy to be
 fed from my trencher.
 128

Baj. My empty stomach, full of idle heat,
 130 Draws bloody humours from my feeble parts,

Preserving life by hasting cruël death.

132 My veins are pale; my sinews hard and dry;
 My joints benumbed; unless I eat, I die.
 134

Zab. Eat, Bajazeth: and let us live in spite of them, –
 136 looking some happy power will pity and enlarge us.

138 **Tamb.** Here, Turk; wilt thou have a clean trencher?

140 **Baj.** Ay, tyrant, and more meat.

142 **Tamb.** Soft, sir; you must be dieted; too much eating
 will make you surfeit.
 144

146 **Ther.** So it would, my lord, 'specially having so small
 a walk and so little exercise.

148 [A second course of crowns is brought in.]

(2) he plans to travel to (metaphorically *trace*) those lands
 and conquer them with his sword (ie. his *pen*).⁵

= ie. naming, or renaming.

= Tamburlaine means he will fix the prime meridian - the
 primary longitude from which the other longitudes of the
 world are measured (located at Greenwich, England, in
 modern times) - in Damascus (Ribner, p. 96-97).⁹

= ie. "by sacrificing all these momentous plans of mine?"

= forever.⁹

= permission.

= ie. the life of Zenocrate's father, the Soldan, will be spared.

126-7: in prose; *may'st* = should.

= wooden plate.

129-133: Bajazeth describes the pains of starvation.

129-130: consistent with medieval physiological theory,
 the Turkish emperor describes *blood* as one of the four
 fluids, or *humours*, contained in the body (see the note at
 Act II.vii.19-20). Each humour was also identified as being
 either hot or cold in combination with dry or wet; blood was
 hot and wet, hence Bajazeth describing his blood as *full of
 idle heat*.

131: Bajazeth's stomach is trying to save itself, even as
 those efforts accelerate the death of the rest of his
 body.¹²

hasting = hastening, an alternate form.

= ie. because his blood is being drawn to his stomach.

= to spite; lines 135-165 are in prose.

136: "in the hopes that some favourable or successful force
 or army (*happy power*) will, with luck, come by, and, feeling
 pity, free us."

= wooden dish (to eat from).

140: Bajazeth finally resigns himself to eating.

= "not so fast".²

= get sick from overeating.

= space to walk around in.

148: Bevington observes that the first course of crowns

150 **Tamb.** Theridamas, Techelles, and Casane, here are
 152 the cates you desire to finger, are they not?
 154 **Ther.** Ay, my lord: but none save kings must feed with
 156 these.
 158 **Tech.** 'Tis enough for us to see them, and for
 160 Tamburlaine only to enjoy them.
 162 **Tamb.** Well; here is now to the Soldan of Egypt, the
 164 King of Arabia, and the Governor of Damascus. Now
 166 take these three crowns, and pledge me, my contributory
 168 kings. – I crown you here, Theridamas, King of Argier;
 170 Techelles, King of Fess; and Usumcasane, King of
 Morocco. – How say you to this, Turk? these are
 not your contributory kings.
Baj. Nor shall they long be thine, I warrant them.
Tamb. Kings of Argier, Morocco, and of Fess,
 You that have marched with happy Tamburlaine
 As far as from the frozen place of Heaven,
 172 Unto the watery morning's ruddy bower,
 And thence by land unto the torrid zone,
 174 Deserve these titles I endow you with,
 By valour and by magnanimity.
 176 Your births shall be no blemish to your fame,
 For virtue is the fount whence honour springs,
 178 And they are worthy she investeth kings.
 180 **Ther.** And since your highness hath so well vouchsafed,
 If we deserve them not with higher meeds
 182 Than erst our states and actions have retained,
 Take them away again and make us slaves.
 184 **Tamb.** Well said, Theridamas; when holy fates

(those belonging to Bajazeth's contributory kings) was delivered to Tamburlaine after the defeat of the Turks; see Act III.iii.276-281.

= delicacies.

= assure.

= lucky or successful.¹

171-2: "as far as is the distance from Heaven to the furthest reaches of the east".

place = some editors emend **place** to **plage** (meaning region); however, **place of Heaven** was a common collocation of the era.

watery...bower = **morning** is **watery** because it is dewy and **ruddy** because of its red hue.

bower = abode.¹

173: **thence** = from there.

the torrid zone = the area between the tropics of Cancer and Capricorn, ie. the hot regions.¹ Actually, the real Tamburlaine never crossed the northern hemisphere's Tropic of Cancer, which passes through southern Egypt and central Arabia, nor has the fictional Tamburlaine crossed it (yet) either. Tamburlaine is using hyperbole to describe the great lengths he and his companions have travelled.

176: "the fact that none of you is of noble or high birth will not harm your reputations or honours".

177: "for power (**virtue**) is the spring (**fount**) from which true honour originates".

= those who deserve it. = ie. personified Virtue.

= granted.

181-2: "and if we do not deserve to keep the crowns through bearing and conduct which is even greater than that we engaged in before".

higher meeds = greater excellence or deserving.²

erst = previously, ie. up till now.

186 | Shall 'stablish me in strong Egyptia,
We mean to travel to th' antarctic pole,
188 | Conquering the people underneath our feet,
And be renowned as never emperors were. –
190 | Zenocrate, I will not crown thee yet,
Until with greater honours I be graded.

192

[*Exeunt.*]

END OF ACT IV.

= meaning both (1) literally treading upon, and (2) "who live in the southern hemisphere".¹⁴

ACT V.

SCENE I.

[*Inside Damascus.*]

*Enter the Governor of Damascus,
with several Citizens, and four Virgins,
having branches of laurel in their hands.*

1 **Gov.** Still doth this man, or rather god of war,
2 Batter our walls and beat our turrets down;
And to resist with longer stubbornness
4 Or hope of rescue from the Soldan's power,
Were but to bring our wilful overthrow,
6 And make us desperate of our threatened lives.
We see his tents have now been alterèd
8 With terrors to the last and cruellest hue.
His coal-black colours everywhere advanced,
10 Threaten our city with a general spoil;

And if we should with common rites of arms
12 Offer our safeties to his clemency,
I fear the custom, proper to his sword,
14 Which he observes as parcel of his fame,
Intending so to terrify the world,
16 By any innovation or remorse,
Will never be dispensed with till our deaths;

18 Therefore, for these our harmless virgins' sakes,
Whose honours and whose lives rely on him,
20 Let us have hope that their unspotted prayers,
Their blubbered cheeks, and hearty, humble moans,

22 Will melt his fury into some remorse,
And use us like a loving conqueror.
24

Ist Virg. If humble suits or imprecations,

26 (Uttered with tears of wretchedness and blood
Shed from the heads and hearts of all our sex,

Entering Characters: the *four Virgins* are maidens who will be sent out of Damascus to try to persuade Tamburlaine to spare their city.

Having waited till the terrible third day of the siege to reach out to Tamburlaine, the citizens of Damascus are understandably worried about their fate.

= continuously. = ie. Tamburlaine.

4: the Egyptians, we remember, rule Syria, and thus are militarily responsible for protecting Damascus.

5: the sense is that to delay surrender any further will guarantee that they will be destroyed by Tamburlaine.

= destruction; if by the third day of a siege a city has not surrendered, Tamburlaine will have every human occupant killed.

11-12: "and if as is customary by the laws of war we throw ourselves at his mercy".

= ie. "Tamburlaine's". = characteristic of or belonging to. = (an essential) part.¹⁴

16-17: ie. "Tamburlaine's customary procedure will not be altered, through any new ideas or pity, before we are all slaughtered."

= untainted, pure.

= tearful; previous editors point out how the word was not intended to convey any sense of ridiculousness.^{5,7}
hearty = ie. heartfelt.¹⁴

= pity.⁵

= ie. "and persuade him to treat (**use**) us".

25-34: in this speech made up of a single lengthy and sinuous sentence, the Virgin suggests the Governor should not have waited for Tamburlaine's black banners to go up before submitting to him.

suits = petitions, entreaties.

imprecations = prayers.

28 Some made your wives and some your children)
 Might have entreated your obdurate breasts
 30 To entertain some care of our securities

Whiles only danger beat upon our walls,
 32 These more than dangerous warrants of our death
Had never been erected as they be,

34 Nor you depend on such weak helps as we.

36 **Gov.** Well, lovely virgins, think our country's care,

Our love of honour, loath to be inthrall'd
 38 To foreign powers and rough imperious yokes,
 Would not with too much cowardice or fear,
 40 (Before all hope of rescue were denied)
 Submit yourselves and us to servitude.
 42 Therefore in that your safeties and our own,
 Your honours, liberties, and lives were weighed
 44 In equal care and balance with our own,
 Endure as we the malice of our stars,
 46 The wrath of Tamburlaine and power of wars;
 Or be the means the overweighing heavens
 48 Have kept to qualify these hot extremes,
 And bring us pardon in your cheerful looks.

50 **2nd Virg.** Then here before the majesty of Heaven
 52 And holy patrons of Egyptia,
 With knees and hearts submissive we entreat
 54 Grace to our words and pity to our looks
 That this device may prove propitiöus,

56 And through the eyes and ears of Tamburlaine
 Convey events of mercy to his heart;

58 Grant that these signs of victory we yield

May bind the temples of his conquering head,
 60 To hide the folded furrows of his brows,
 And shadow his displeas'd countenance
 62 With happy looks of ruth and lenity. –
 Leave us, my lord, and loving countrymen;
 64 What simple virgins may persuade, we will.

66 **Gov.** Farewell, sweet virgins, on whose safe return
 Depends our city, liberty, and lives.

= being.¹²
 = stubborn, resistant to persuasion.¹
 30: "to have some consideration for our safety"; the Virgin
 is bitter and sarcastic.

= ie. "while only the *threat* of destruction".¹²
 32: allusion to the black banners and tents of Tamburlaine.
 = "would never have been".

34: "we would not have reached this absurd point in which
 the lives of everyone in the city now depend on us, its
 weakest citizens, to save them."

36-41: the Governor explains that (1) his concern for
 Damascus, (2) his desire for honour, and (3) his fear of
 enslavement, all required that he not submit to Tamburlaine,
 which would be a cowardly act, so long as there was some
 hope they would be rescued by the Soldan.
think = know that.
our = ie. my (the royal "we").

= enslaved.

= ie. "in light of the fact that".¹²

= my.
 = "as I do". = "the evil fate our stars have fixed for us".

47-48: "or (you Virgins) be the agents the most important
 (*overweighing*) powers of Heaven above have appointed
 to alleviate this acute point of crisis (*extremes*)".

= strategy.²

56-57: an interesting image of the Virgins' supplications,
 which Tamburlaine would both see and hear, sending a
 message of *mercy* through his *eyes and ears* to his *heart*.

= ie. the branches of laurel, with which they hope to make
 a wreath that Tamburlaine will accept. The laurel was a
 a symbol of victory.

60-61: ie. to cause his anger to fade.

= pity. = mercy.¹⁵

[*Exeunt Governor and Citizens; the Virgins remain.*]

ACT V, SCENE II.

[*Tamburlaine's camp outside Damascus.*]

Still on-stage: *the Virgins of Damascus.*

Enter Tamburlaine, all in black and very melancholy, Techelles, Theridamas, Usumcasane, with others.

1 **Tamb.** What, are the turtles frayed out of their nests?

2 Alas, poor fools! must you be first shall feel

The sworn destruction of Damascus?

4 They know my custom; could they not as well
Have sent ye out, when first my milk-white flags,
6 Through which sweet Mercy threw her gentle beams,
Reflexing them on your disdainful eyes,
8 As now, when fury and incensèd hate
Flings slaughtering terror from my coal-black tents,
10 And tells for truth submissions comes too late?

12 **1st Virg.** Most happy King and Emperor of the earth,

Image of honour and nobility,
14 For whom the powers divine have made the world,
And on whose throne the holy Graces sit;
16 In whose sweet person is comprised the sum
Of Nature's skill and heavenly majesty;
18 Pity our plights! O pity poor Damascus!
Pity old age, within whose silver hairs
20 Honour and reverence evermore have reigned!
Pity the marriage bed, where many a lord,
22 In prime and glory of his loving joy,
Embraceth now with tears of ruth and blood
24 The jealous body of his fearful wife,
Whose cheeks and hearts so punished with conceit,
26 To think thy puissant, never-stayèd arm,

Will part their bodies, and prevent their souls
28 From heavens of comfort yet their age might bear,

Now wax all pale and withered to the death,
30 As well for grief our ruthless governor

69: the Virgins remain on-stage for the next scene.

Scene II: the Virgins are understood to have left Damascus and entered the camp of Tamburlaine's army.

1f: Tamburlaine addresses the Virgins.

turtles = turtledoves; *tortoise* was the name assigned to all the reptiles with shells on their backs of the Testudines order.¹

frayed = frightened.² *Fray* and *afraid* are cognates, both derived from *affray*, meaning "to frighten".¹

2: **fools** = helpless ones; the expression is more sympathetic than it appears.

first = ie. "the first persons who".

= plural form of **you**.

= casting or reflecting.¹

= ie. yielding (the city).¹⁵

12-17: the Virgins try to flatter Tamburlaine.

happy = fortunate.

= the **Graces**, or Charities, were three goddesses who were responsible for bestowing beauty and gracefulness.

19-20: ie. "pity our elderly, whom the citizens of Damascus have always honoured and revered."

= probably meaning "apprehensive".¹

= oppressed with the notion.¹⁴

= know. = mighty. = never stopping or ceasing activity.¹

27: **part** = split.

27-28: **prevent...bear** = ie. prevent them from living out a peaceful old age.

= grow.

30-31: "and everyone greatly regrets that the governor did

<p>Have thus refused the mercy of thy hand, 32 (Whose sceptre angels kiss and Furies dread,) 34 As for their liberties, their loves, or lives! 34 O then for these, and such as we ourselves, 36 For us, our infants, and for all our <u>bloods</u>, 36 That never nourished thought against thy rule, 38 Pity, O pity, sacred Emperor, 38 The <u>prostrate service</u> of this wretched town,</p>	<p>not submit to you earlier". 32: the Virgins toss out an additional bit of gratuitous flattery. = ie. lives.¹² 36: ie. "(we) who have never had anything against you". = bowing down or lying with one's face on the ground in submission.</p>
<p>And take in sign thereof this gilded wreath;</p>	<p>39: the Virgins ask Tamburlaine to take the gilded wreath as evidence that he will accept the city's surrender.</p>
<p>40 Whereto <u>each man of rule</u> hath given his hand, 40 And wished, as worthy subjects, <u>happy means</u> 42 To be investors of thy royal brows 42 Even with the true Egyptian diadem!</p>	<p>40-43: every man involved in governing Damascus (<i>each man of rule</i>) has taken part in this favourable opportunity (<i>happy means</i>)¹⁵ to offer Tamburlaine the position of the King of Damascus.</p>
<p>44 Tamb. Virgins, in vain you labour to prevent 46 That which mine honour swears shall be performed. 46 Behold my sword! what see you at the point?</p>	
<p>48 Ist Virg. Nothing but fear, and fatal steel, my lord.</p>	
<p>50 Tamb. Your fearful minds are thick and misty then;</p>	<p>51: "your terror is apparently preventing you from seeing clearly."</p>
<p>52 For <u>there</u> sits Death; there sits imperious Death 52 Keeping his circuit by <u>the slicing edge</u>.</p>	<p>52: <i>there</i> = ie. at the point of his sword. 52-53: <i>there sits...edge</i> = personified Death is imagined to be a judge, travelling <i>his circuit</i> and trying cases, deciding whether each individual shall live or die (Wolff, p. 243).¹³ <i>by the slicing edge</i> = ie. of Tamburlaine's sword.</p>
<p>54 But I am pleased you shall not see him there; 54 He now is seated on my horsemen's spears,</p>	<p>54-55: Death's courtroom has been transferred from the sword of Tamburlaine to the ends of the spears of his cavalry.¹³</p>
<p>56 And on their points <u>his fleshless body</u> feeds. – Techelles, <u>straight go charge</u> a few of them</p>	<p>= Death was traditionally imagined to be a skeleton (Ribner, p. 101).⁹ 57: <i>straight</i> = immediately. <i>charge</i> = order; note Tamburlaine's word play with <i>charge</i> in the next line.</p>
<p>58 To <u>charge</u> these dames, and <u>shew</u> my servant, Death, 58 <u>Sitting in scarlet</u> on their armèd spears. 60 62 Virgins. O pity us!</p>	<p>= ie. charge upon. = show, ie. present. = dressed in the red robe of a judge.¹³</p>
<p>62 Tamb. Away with them, I say, and <u>shew</u> them Death. 64 66 [The Virgins are taken out.]</p>	<p>= show.</p>
<p>66 I will not spare these proud Egyptiäns, 68 Nor change my martial <u>observatiöns</u></p>	<p>= customary practice.²</p>

	For all the wealth of <u>Gihon's</u> golden waves,	= the Gihon , originally the second of Eden's four rivers (Genesis 2:10), refers here to the Oxus River of central Asia. ²⁷
70	Or for the love of Venus, would she leave The angry god of arms and lie with me.	143-4: reference to the famous affair the goddess of beauty had with Mars, the god of war.
72	They have refused the offer of their lives, And know my customs are as <u>péremptory</u>	73-74: Tamburlaine's notorious procedure for reducing a city is as unalterable (peremptory) as are (1) the planets ,
74	As wrathful <u>planets</u> , <u>death</u> , or <u>destiny</u> .	in their role of determining a person's fortune based on their alignment at his or her birth, (2) death , and (3) fate (destiny). peremptory = pronounced with the primary stress on its first syllable (PER-emp-to-ry).
76	<i>Re-enter Techelles.</i>	
78	What, have your horsemen <u>shewn</u> the virgins Death?	151: note the Compression of Time that has occurred here: in the thirty seconds it took Tamburlaine to speak eight lines, Techelles delivered the orders and the cavalry murdered the Virgins. shewn = shown.
80	Tech. They have, my lord, and on Damascus' walls Have hoisted up their slaughtered carcasses.	
82	Tamb. A sight as <u>baneful</u> to <u>their</u> souls, I think,	= toxic or destructive. = the Damascene citizens'.
84	As are <u>Thessalian drugs</u> or <u>mithridate</u> :	157: Thessalian drugs = the mountains of Thessaly in central Greece were well-known in ancient times for both the abundance of medicinal plants and herbs which grew there, and the witches who made poisonous potions of them. ²⁸ mithridate = normally refers to an antidote to poison, but here it means poison itself. ⁹
86	But go, my lords, put <u>the rest</u> to the sword.	= ie. the remaining and entire population of Damascus.
88	<i>[Exeunt all except Tamburlaine.]</i>	Tamburlaine's cruelty: with the Virgins' lifeless corpses hanging from the walls of Damascus, here is a good place for a look at some of the "greatest hits" of Timur's (the real Tamburlaine's) cruelty; for in order to spread the maximum fear of his name, Timur was not satisfied to simply slaughter every last soul in a city he was looking to capture.
		(1) His favorite pastime was to have his troops build giant pyramids of the skulls of his victims: a typical such pyramid might contain several thousand skulls;
		(2) it was recorded that one time he had his cavalry crush thousands of women and children to death under the horses' hooves;
		(3) in 1398, angered that his 100,000 Hindu prisoners were cheering on his foes as he battled in India, Timur had every last prisoner slain, a task that was too trying even for some of his own hard-bitten men;
		(4) and in what may be the most horrifying incident of all, when Timur captured the Persian city of Isfizar, he ordered a tower to be constructed from the captives of the city: living men and women "were piled on top of each other, along with bricks and mortar" (see Bartlett, pp. 242-4, 249). ¹¹
90	Ah, fair Zenocrate! – divine Zenocrate! – <u>Fair</u> is too foul an epithet for <u>thee</u> ,	163: ie. "the word fair is not good enough to describe you"; note that in apostrophizing to Zenocrate, Tamburlaine uses

92 That in thy passion for thy country's love,
And fear to see thy kingly father's harm,
With hair dishevelled wip'st thy watery cheeks;

94 And, like to Flora in her morning's pride,
Shaking her silver tresses in the air,
96 Rain'st on the earth resolvèd pearl in showers,

And sprinklest sapphires on thy shining face,
98 Where Beauty, mother to the Muses, sits

And comments volumes with her ivory pen,
100 Taking instructions from thy flowing eyes;
Eyes that, when Ebena steps to Heaven,

102 In silence of thy solemn evening's walk,
Making the mantle of the richest night,
104 The moon, the planets, and the meteors, light;

There angels in their crystal armours fight

106 A doubtful battle with my tempted thoughts
For Egypt's freedom, and the Soldan's life;
108 His life that so consumes Zenocrate,
Whose sorrows lay more siege unto my soul,
110 Than all my army to Damascus' walls:
And neither Persian's sovereign, nor the Turk
112 Troubled my senses with conceit of foil
So much by much as doth Zenocrate.
114 What is beauty, saith my sufferings, then?

116 If all the pens that ever poets held
Had fed the feeling of their masters' thoughts,
And every sweetness that inspired their hearts,
118 Their minds, and muses on admirèd themes;

If all the heavenly quintessence they still

thee as a signal of his deep affection for her.

= sorrow.⁵

= wipes.

94-96: *Flora*, the Roman goddess of flowers, appears in the spring, bringing rain showers with her.
resolved = dissolved.

97: a metaphor for the tears of Zenocrate.

= by tradition, the *Muses'* mother was actually Mnemosyne, the personification of memory.¹⁹

= "takes extensive notes"¹² about Zenocrate's beauty.

= Ribner notes that no such deity as *Ebena* exists, and that what or who Marlowe is referring to here has been the source of much historical conjecture (p. 102).⁹ Schelling suggests *Ebena* may be a personification of Evening;⁶ Wolff wonders if there is a connection with ebony, so that the phrase *when Ebena steps to Heaven* means "when darkness falls". The fact that the line is metrically irregular suggests it may be corrupt.

103-4: even in the darkest night, Zenocrate's eyes illuminate the heavenly bodies; note how lines 103-5 comprise a dramatic rhyming triplet.

105-113: Tamburlaine admits he has been considering sparing Egypt (which includes Syria) and Zenocrate's father from his wrath.

105: in this poetical description of the stars, Cunningham sees an allusion to Judges 5:20: "*They fought from heauen, euen the starres in their courses fought against Sisera.*" (Geneva Bible Version).

= divisive.¹

= often emended to *Persia's*.

= expectation of defeat.⁶

114-144: Tamburlaine expounds at length on the effect *beauty* has on men in general, and on soldiers and himself in particular.

114: "how is it that beauty has such power, as my own troubled thoughts can attest to?" (Bevington, p. 415).¹²

115-124: these 10 lines are comprised of a series of lengthy conditional clauses.

115-8: "if all the pens that all poets ever held were able to put all of their poets' thoughts of beauty into words."

muses = deified inspiration.

119-122: "if all the sublimest expressions, which like a

120 From their immortal flowers of poesy,
 Wherein, as in a mirror, we perceive
 122 The highest reaches of a human wit;

If these had made one poem's period,

124 And all combined in beauty's worthiness,
 Yet should there hover in their restless heads
 126 One thought, one grace, one wonder, at the least,
 Which into words no virtue can digest,
 128 But how unseemly is it for my sex,
 My discipline of arms and chivalry,
 130 My nature, and the terror of my name,
 To harbour thoughts effeminate and faint!

132 Save only that in beauty's just applause,
 With whose instinct the soul of man is touched;
 134 And every warrior that is rapt with love
 Of fame, of valour, and of victory,
 136 Must needs have beauty beat on his conceits:

I thus conceiving and subduing both
 138 That which hath stopped the tempest of the gods,

Even from the fiery-spangled veil of Heaven,
 140 To feel the lovely warmth of shepherds' flames,
 And march in cottages of strowèd reeds,

142 Shall give the world to note for all my birth,
 That virtue solely is the sum of glory,
 144 And fashions men with true nobility. –
 Who's within there?

mirror reflect humanity's finest facility with words."

quintessence = essence.

still = ie. distill; with *quintessence*, a chemistry or alchemy metaphor.

flowers = a monosyllable.

poesy = poetry, a trisyllable: *PO-e-sy*.

wit = capacity for quality in expression.

123: "if all these things could be combined into a single verse (*period*)¹ of a poem"; the OED, however, cites this line in the entry for *period* meaning "goal" or "purpose".

125-131: "yet there would still be one idea that poets could never successfully put on paper, one which no power can express in words (*no virtue can digest*): how unseemly it would be for someone like me, who is a man, a soldier, and feared throughout the world, to be thinking about something as effeminate as beauty."

After such a lovely beginning to the passage, our hero's vain conclusion is anticlimactic!

faint = feeble.¹⁴

132-6: "except that every true warrior, who by his nature loves fame, valour, and victory, will by necessity inevitably also think about beauty, as does every man".

beauty's just applause = the merited acclamation of *beauty*.

instinct = stressed on its second syllable.

rapt = enraptured.¹

137-8: "I, in fancying yet overcoming (or conquering) that (beauty) which has subdued even the gods"; *both* refers to *conceiving* and *subduing*.

139-141: "beauty, which has caused even the king of the gods to descend from Heaven to pursue it".

The reference here seems to be to one of the loveliest of myths: Jupiter and Mercury, disguised as mortals, went searching for good people, but the doors of a thousand houses were shut in their faces; the impoverished elderly couple Philemon and Baucus, however, invited the gods in and served them as much as their means permitted. In return for their kindness, Jupiter granted the couple any wish; they asked to be made priests of Jupiter and to die together. After drowning all their neighbors, Jupiter turned their home into a temple, and when the couple died, transformed them into intertwining oak and linden trees (Humphries, 200-4).²²

fiery-spangled = ie. sparkling with stars.

strowèd reeds = "reeds strewn on the floor";¹⁵ some editors emend this to *straw and weeds*, based on the relevant passage in Arthur Golding's mid-16th century translation of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, in which he describes Baucus' cottage as "*thatched all with straw and fennish reede*."

= "power alone". = "highest attainable point".^{1,15}

128-144: here is Schelling's paraphrase of this passage: "I,

176 But let us save the reverend Soldan's life,
For fair Zenocrate that so laments his state.

178 **Tamb.** That will we chiefly see unto, Theridamas,
For sweet Zenocrate, whose worthiness
180 Deserves a conquest over every heart. –
And now, my footstool, if I lose the field,
182 You hope of liberty and restitution? –
Here let him stay, my masters, from the tents,
184 Till we have made us ready for the field. –
Pray for us, Bajazeth; we are going.

186
188 [Exeunt Tamburlaine, Techelles, Usumcasane,
and Persians.]

190 **Baj.** Go, never to return with victory.
Millions of men encompass thee about,
192 And gore thy body with as many wounds!
Sharp, forkèd arrows light upon thy horse!

194 Furies from the black Cocytus lake,
Break up the earth, and with their firebrands
196 Enforce thee run upon the baneful pikes!
Volleys of shot pierce through thy charmèd skin,
198 And every bullet dipt in poisoned drugs!
Or, roaring cannons sever all thy joints,
200 Making thee mount as high as eagles soar!

202 **Zab.** Let all the swords and lances in the field
Stick in his breast as in their proper rooms!
204 At every pore let blood come dropping forth,
That lingering pains may massacre his heart,
206 And madness send his damnèd soul to hell!

208 **Baj.** Ah, fair Zabina! we may curse his power;
The heavens may frown, the earth for anger quake:
210 But such a star hath influence in his sword,
As rules the skies and countermands the gods

212 More than Cimmerian Styx or destiny;

214 And then shall we in this detested guise,
With shame, with hunger, and with horror aye,

Gripping our bowels with retorquèd thoughts,

= Tamburlaine addresses Bajazeth.

= for.

= ie. away from.

184: "until we are ready to offer battle."

187-8: only Bajazeth and Zabina remain on-stage.

= ie. "may millions". = surround.

= barbed arrows; in such an arrow, sharp prongs extend in the reverse direction near the head, resulting in extensive tearing of the flesh when the arrow is pulled out of its victim.

= the River *Cocytus* was a branch of the River Styx, the principle river of the underworld.¹⁹

= "force you to". = deadly.¹⁴

= ie. arrow.

200: ie. "blasting your body into the sky!"

= "as if they were in their own (*proper*) homes (ie. their sheathes)."¹⁵

= ie. on.

= "commands or controls even the gods".¹

212: Bajazeth alludes to the tradition that a promise or vow made on the river Styx was the most powerful and absolutely binding one a god could make; thus Tamburlaine, says Bajazeth, has more power over the gods than even the river Styx has.

Cimmerian = dark or black; see the note at line 95 of Act III.ii.

Styx = the primary river of Hades.

= manner.¹

= forever (remain).

215: *gripping* = gripping or clutching.

with retorqued thoughts = Dyce has the best gloss for

216 And have no hope to end our ecstasies.

218 **Zab.** Then is there left no Mahomet, no God,
 No fiend, no fortune, nor no hope of end
 220 To our infáamous monstrous slaveries. –

Gape earth, and let the fiends infernal view

222 A hell as hopeless and as full of fear
 As are the blasted banks of Erebus,

224 Where shaking ghosts with ever-howling groans
 Hover about the ugly ferryman,

226 To get a passage to Elysium!

Why should we live? O, wretches, beggars, slaves!
 228 Why live we, Bajazeth, and build up nests
 So high within the region of the air

230 By living long in this oppression,
 That all the world will see and laugh to scorn
 232 The former triumphs of our mightiness
 In this obscure infernal servitude?

234 **Baj.** O life, more loathsome to my vexèd thoughts

236 Than noisome parbreak of the Stygian snakes,

Which fills the nooks of hell with standing air,
 238 Infecting all the ghosts with cureless griefs!
 O dreary engines of my loathèd sight,
 240 That see my crown, my honour, and my name
 Thrust under yoke and thraldom of a thief,
 242 Why feed ye still on day's accursèd beams
 And sink not quite into my tortured soul?
 244 You see my wife, my queen, and emperess,
 Brought up and proppèd by the hand of fame,
 246 Queen of fifteen contributory queens,
 Now thrown to rooms of black abjection,

248 Smearèd with blots of basest drudgery,
 And villainess to shame, disdain, and misery.

this uniquely Marlovian phrase: "bent back in reflections on our former happiness" (p. 34).⁵

= ie. state of fear or anxiety.¹

= here and later, the location of *infamous* in the line suggests the stress falls on the second syllable.
 221f: an imperative: "Gape, earth, and let the demons below see up here a hell on earth, as hopeless, etc."

223: *blasted* = withered.
banks of Erebus = *Erebus* properly is the dark region souls must pass through on their journey to Hades; by *banks of Erebus*, Wolff suggests Zabina means the banks of the Styx.

= ie. the souls of the dead.

= allusion to Charon, the famous elderly *ferryman* who transports the souls of the dead across the rivers of the underworld to deliver them to Hades proper.

= referring to Hades generally, although *Elysium* technically describes the part of hell in which the blessed souls are sent.

228-9: *build up...air* = daydream of events that will not occur; the expression, which appears in other drama of the era, seems to be used in similar fashion to the more familiar "building castles in the air".

= troubled.

236: *noisome parbreak* = foul vomit.¹
Stygian = ie. literally meaning "of the river Styx", but here likely referring to Hades generally.

= stagnant, not-moving.
 = souls. = illnesses.¹⁴
 239: typical Elizabethan imagery describing the eyes.

= captivity.¹
 = plural form of "you".

= appointed or supported.¹

= degradation; Zabina, we remember, is not kept in the cage with her husband.
 = menial work.
 = servant or slave.⁵

<p>250 Accursèd Bajazeth, whose words of <u>ruth</u>,</p> <p>(That would with pity cheer Zabina's heart, 252 And make our souls <u>resolve</u> in ceaseless tears,) Sharp hunger bites upon, and <u>gripes</u> the root, 254 From whence the issues of my thoughts do break; – O poor Zabina! O my queen! my queen! 256 Fetch me some water for my burning breast, To cool and comfort me with longer <u>date</u>, 258 That in the shortened <u>sequel</u> of my life</p> <p>I may pour forth my soul into thine arms 260 With words of love, whose moaning intercourse Hath hitherto been <u>stayèd</u> with wrath and hate</p> <p>262 Of our <u>expressless banned</u> inflictions.</p> <p>264 Zab. Sweet Bajazeth, I will prolong thy life, As long as any blood or spark of breath 266 Can quench or cool the torments of my grief.</p> <p>268 <i>[Exit Zabina.]</i></p>	<p>250-4: briefly, biting hunger cuts off Bajazeth's ability to speak words of comfort to his wife. <u>ruth</u> = pity. = dissolve. = seizes. = term of existence, ie. life. = remaining period. 259-261: ie. Bajazeth admits his raging emotions have prevented him from being able to engage in intimate discourse with Zabina. <u>stayèd</u> = prevented. = ineffable, that cannot be expressed. = cursed.⁵</p>
<p>270 Baj. Now, Bajazeth, <u>abridge thy baneful days</u>, And beat thy brains out of thy conquered head, 272 Since other means are all forbidden me, That may be <u>ministers</u> of my <u>decay</u>.</p> <p>274 O, highest lamp of ever-living Jove, Accursèd day! infected with my griefs, 276 Hide now thy stainèd face in endless night, And shut the windows of the lightsome heavens! 278 Let ugly <u>Darkness</u> with her rusty coach, <u>Engirt</u> with tempests, wrapt in <u>pitchy</u> clouds, 280 Smother the earth with never-fading mists! And <u>let her horses</u> from their nostrils breathe 282 Rebellious winds and dreadful thunder-claps! That in this terror Tamburlaine may live, 284 And my <u>pined</u> soul, <u>resolved</u> in <u>liquid air</u>,</p>	<p>= ie. "shorten your life"; <u>baneful</u> = hateful.¹⁴ 272-3: like prisoners in a modern jail whose belts have been taken away so that they cannot hang themselves, Bajazeth has been allowed no instrument in his cage which he might use to kill himself. <u>ministers</u> = agents. <u>decay</u> = destruction.¹ = <u>Darkness</u> is personified as driving a coach. = encircled. = pitch-black. = ie. the horses pulling Darkness' coach. 284: <u>pined</u> = wasted away from sorrow or suffering.² <u>resolved</u> = dissolved. <u>liquid air</u> = describing air as clear, like water.¹</p>
<p>286 May still excruciate his tormented thoughts! Then let the <u>stony dart</u> of <u>senseless</u> cold Pierce through the centre of my withered heart, 288 And make a passage for my loathèd life!</p> <p>290 <i>[He brains himself against the cage.]</i></p> <p>292 <i>Re-enter Zabina.</i></p>	<p>= unfeeling spear or arrow.¹ = ie. without physical feeling. 290: a certain candidate for a top-five stage direction from Elizabethan drama. We may note here that the real Ottoman Sultan, Bayezid I, was indeed captured by Tamburlaine in the Battle of Angora (Ankara) in 1402 and died in captivity in 1403.⁸</p>

294 **Zab.** What do mine eyes behold? my husband dead!
 His skull all riven in twain! his brains dashed out, –
 296 The brains of Bajazeth, my lord and sovereign:
 O Bajazeth, my husband and my lord!
 298 O Bajazeth! O Turk! O Emperor!
 Give him his liquor? not I. Bring milk and fire, and

300 my blood I bring him again. – Tear me in pieces – give
 me the sword with a ball of wild-fire upon it. – Down

302 with him! Down with him! – Go to my child! Away!
 Away! Away! – Ah, save that infant! save him, save
 304 him! – I, even I, speak to her. – The sun was down –
streamers white, red, black – here, here, here! – Fling
 306 the meat in his face – Tamburlaine. – Tamburlaine! –
 Let the soldiers be buried. – Hell! Death, Tamburlaine,
 308 Hell! Make ready my coach, my chair, my jewels. – I
 come! I come! I come!

310
 312 *[She runs against the cage and brains herself.]*
 314 *Enter Zenocrate with Anippe.*

Zeno. Wretched Zenocrate! that liv'st to see

316 Damascus' walls dyed with Egyptian blood,
Thy father's subjects and thy countrymen;
 318 The streets strowed with dissevered joints of men
 And wounded bodies gasping yet for life:
 320 But most accurst, to see the sun-bright troop
 Of heavenly virgins and unspotted maids,
 322 (Whose looks might make the angry god of arms
 To break his sword and mildly treat of love)
 324 On horsemen's lances to be hoisted up
 And guiltlessly endure a cruël death:
 326 For every fell and stout Tartarian steed,
 That stamped on others with their thundering hoofs,
 328 When all their riders charged their quivering spears,

Began to check the ground and rein themselves,

330 Gazing upon the beauty of their looks. –
 Ah Tamburlaine! wert thou the cause of this,
 332 That term't Zenocrate thy dearest love?
Whose lives were dearer to Zenocrate

= split in two; **riven** is a monosyllable: *ri'n*.

299-309: as her distraught emotions get the best of her, Zabina's speech turns to prose, as is conventional in Elizabethan drama for those out of their minds.

liquor = drink.

= probable reference to Greek fire, an incendiary substance which resists suppression by ordinary means. This material, whose formula was kept secret by the Byzantines, likely played a large part in saving their empire from destruction by its numerous enemies over the centuries, as it could be deployed against enemy ships, whose sailors had no recourse to put out the flames, water being useless against it.

= pennants.

= like Bajazeth before her, Zenocrate calls for an allegorical coach, but hers represents Death.

315f: note that Zenocrate, so wrapped up in her own angst, fails for twenty lines to even notice the now-dead Sultan and his wife before her.

= ie. "the blood of thy".

= strewn.

= untainted by sin or sex.

= ie. Mars.

= discourse on.

= fierce or cruel. = proud or formidable.¹

= levelled,¹⁴ as for a charge.¹⁵

= perhaps "stop suddenly (on)"; an 1887 dictionary has the following definition of **check**: "when a hound stops on its own accord, having lost scent".²⁰ Ribner suggests "stamp upon", and Bevington "paw".

= "you who call".

= ie. the lives of the Virgins.¹²

334	Than her own life, or <u>ought save</u> thine own love. –	= "anything and everything except".
	But see another bloody spectacle!	
336	Ah, wretched eyes, the enemies of my heart,	335: Zenocrate finally notices the corpses before her.
	How are <u>ye</u> glutted with these grievous objects,	= plural form of <i>you</i> , addressing her eyes.
338	And tell my soul more tales of <u>bleeding ruth!</u> –	= "pitiable suffering" (Dawson, p. 81). ¹⁵
	See, see, Anippe, if they breathe or no.	
340		
	<i>Anip.</i> No breath, nor sense, nor motion in them both;	
342	Ah, madam! this their slavery hath enforced,	
	And ruthless cruëly of Tamburlaine.	
344		
	<i>Zeno.</i> Earth, cast up fountains from thy <u>entrails</u> ,	345: Zenocrate calls for the earth to send up geysers. ^{1,12} <i>entrails</i> = likely a trisyllable: <i>EN-ter-ails</i> .
346	And wet thy cheeks for their untimely deaths!	
	Shake with their weight in sign of fear and grief! –	
348	<u>Blush</u> , Heaven, that gave them honour at their birth	347: Zenocrate calls for earthquakes. = ie. with embarrassment.
	And let them die a death so barbarous!	
350	<u>Those that</u> are proud of <u>fickle empery</u>	350: <i>Those that</i> = "those people who". <i>fickle</i> = treacherous or dangerous. ¹ <i>emperry</i> = imperial rule. ¹⁵
	And place their chiefest good in earthly pomp,	
352	Behold the Turk and his great Emperess!	352: Zenocrate will repeat this line two more times exactly, and once with variation, in this speech.
	Ah, Tamburlaine! my love! sweet Tamburlaine!	
354	That fight'st for sceptres and for <u>slippery</u> crowns,	= ie. figuratively hard to hold on to. ²
	Behold the Turk and his great Emperess!	
356	Thou, that <u>in conduct</u> of thy <u>happy</u> stars	= under the guidance. ¹² = lucky.
	Sleep'st every night with conquests on thy brows,	
358	And yet would'st shun the wavering turns of war,	358-9: perhaps something like "and yet you would evade or avoid the fickleness and uncertainty of war, if you could experience the distress of Bajazeth and Zabina".
	In fear and feeling of the like distress,	
360	Behold the Turk and his great Emperess!	
	Ah, mighty Jove and holy Mahomet,	361: an interesting intertwining of pagan and Islamic faith!
362	<u>Pardon my love!</u> – O, pardon his contempt	362: "forgive Tamburlaine!" 362-3: <i>pardon his...pity</i> = Bevington suggests, "forgive Tamburlaine for his failure to respect the inevitable downward turn of Fortune (and her wheel) and regard for pity" (p. 417). ¹²
	Of earthly fortune and respect of pity,	
364	And let not conquest, ruthlessly pursued,	364-6: the sense is something like, "let not Tamburlaine's unchecked cruelty and pursuit of conquest anger the gods, leading them to punish Tamburlaine as he punished Bajazeth and Zabina!" <i>hapless</i> = unlucky.
	Be equally against his life incensed	
366	In this great Turk and <u>hapless</u> Emperèss!	
	And pardon me that was not moved with <u>ruth</u>	= pity.
368	To see them live so long in misery!	
	Ah, what may <u>chance</u> to thee, Zenocrate?	= happen.
370		
	<i>Anip.</i> Madam, content yourself, and be resolved	
372	Your love hath <u>Fortune</u> so at his command,	372-3: personified <i>Fortune</i> is regularly portrayed as <i>turning a wheel</i> which arbitrarily raises some people's circumstances and state while lowering those of others. Anippe's point is that the wheel of Tamburlaine's fortune is
	That she shall stay and <u>turn her wheel</u> no more,	

374 376	As long as life maintains his mighty arm That fights for honour <u>to adorn your head</u> .	immobile, frozen with his fortune on top, Fortune no longer turning it so as to cast his luck down again. = ie. with a crown.
378	<i>Enter Philemus, a Messenger.</i>	
380	Zeno. What other <u>heavy</u> news now brings Philemus?	= sad.
382	Phil. Madam, your father, and th' Arabian king, The first <u>affecter</u> of your excellence,	382: ie. "he who loved (<i>affected</i>) you first".
	Comes now, as <u>Turnus</u> 'gainst <u>Aeneas</u> did,	383: Turnus , the king of the Rutulians, made war against Aeneas when the Trojan landed in Italy after fleeing Troy.
384	Armèd with lance into th' Egyptian fields, Ready for battle 'gainst <u>my lord, the king</u> .	= ie. Tamburlaine.
386	Zeno. Now shame and duty, love and fear present	
388	A thousand sorrows to my martyred soul.	
390	Whom should I wish the <u>fatal</u> victory When my poor <u>pleasures</u> are divided thus	= death-dealing. = desires. ²
392	And <u>racked</u> by duty from my cursèd heart? My father and my first-betrothèd love	= tortured: should she support her father or her beloved in the impending battle?
394	Must fight against my life and present love; Wherein the change I use <u>condemns</u> my faith,	= ie. "my capriciousness in this matter causes appropriate suspicion regarding my loyalty". condemns = censures. ¹
396	And makes my deeds infámous through the world: But as the gods, to end the Trojans' toil,	
398	<u>Prevented</u> <u>Turnus</u> of <u>Lavinia</u> , And <u>fatally</u> enriched Aeneas' love,	396-8: Zenocrate returns to the allusion to Turnus and Aeneas raised by the Messenger Philemus at line 383 above. Amata, the wife of Latinus, the king of the Italians, wanted their daughter Lavinia to marry Turnus , who, we remember, made war on Aeneas (<i>the Trojan</i>) on his arrival in Italy. With the help of various gods, including his mother Venus, Aeneas killed Turnus in single-combat. He went on to marry Lavinia and found the Roman race.
400	So for a <u>final issue</u> to my griefs, To pacify my country and my love, Must Tamburlaine <u>by their resistless powers</u>	There is of course an analogy here: Zenocrate (Lavinia), originally meant to marry Alcidamas (Turnus), actually married Tamburlaine (Aeneas), after Tamburlaine (Aeneas) killed Alcidamas (Turnus). Prevented = deprived. ¹ fatally = ie. fatal to Turnus. = an ending.
402	<u>With virtue of</u> a gentle victory Conclude a <u>league</u> of honour <u>to</u> my hope;	401-6: Zenocrate seems to be hoping that Tamburlaine will win an honourable victory, yet save the lives of her father and Alcidamas. by their resistless powers = by means of the irresistible power of the gods. ¹²
404	Then, as the Powers divine have pre-ordained, With happy safety of my father's life	= "by virtue of". ¹ = an alliance. = in accordance with. ¹² 405-6: ie. the Powers who will save her father will, she

406	Send like defence of fair Arabia.	hopes, similarly provide for the safety of the King of Arabia.
408	[<i>Trumpets sound to the battle within:</i> <i>Afterwards, the <u>King of Arabia</u> enters wounded.</i>]	408: the scene now shifts to near a new battlefield, on which Tamburlaine's army has met the Egyptian coalition. = ie. Alcidamas.
410	K. of Arab. What cursèd power guides the murdering hands	
412	Of this infáamous tyrant's soldièrs,	
414	That no escape may save their enemies, Nor fortune keep themselves from victory?	
416	Lie down, <u>Arabia</u> , wounded to the death, And let Zenocrate's fair eyes behold	= meaning himself.
418	That, as for her thou bear'st these wretched arms, Even so for her thou diest in these arms, Leaving thy blood for witness of thy love.	
420	Zeno. Too dear a witness <u>for such love</u> , my lord,	= ie. "for one who is as undeserving of your love as I". ¹²
422	Behold Zenocrate! the cursèd <u>object</u> ,	= sight or spectacle.
424	Whose fortunes never <u>masterèd</u> her griefs; Behold her wounded, <u>in conceit</u> , for thee, As much as thy fair body is for me.	= tamed or overcame. = "in your imagination". ⁵
426	K. of Arab. Then shall I die with full, contented heart,	
428	Having beheld divine Zenocrate, Whose sight with joy would take away my life	
430	As now it bringeth sweetness to my wound, If I had not been wounded as I am.	
432	Ah! <u>that</u> the deadly pangs I suffer now, Would lend an <u>hour's licence</u> to my tongue,	= if only. 433: "would grant me one more hour of life to speak." <i>hour's</i> = a disyllable. <i>license</i> = permission or freedom.
434	To make discourse of some sweet accidents Have chanced thy merits in this worthless bondage;	434-5: a somewhat unclear passage: perhaps, "to talk a bit about those fortuitous occurrences which happened to your excellent or deserving self while in this state of undeserved slavery".
436	And that I might be privy to the state Of thy deserved contentment, and thy love;	436-7: "so that I may learn about the present condition of your contentment and love, in which you deserve to be happy."
438	But, making now a virtue of <u>thy sight</u> ,	= ie. "my seeing you". ¹⁵
440	To drive all sorrow from my fainting soul, Since death denies me farther cause of joy, Deprived of care, my heart with comfort dies, Since thy desirèd hand shall close mine eyes.	
442		441-2: Alcidamas' part concludes with a rhyming couplet.
444	[<i>He dies.</i>]	
446	<i>Re-enter Tamburlaine, leading the Soldan, Techelles, Theridamas, Usumcasane, with others.</i>	Entering Characters: Zenocrate's father, <i>the Soldan</i> of Egypt, is Tamburlaine's prisoner.
448		
450	Tamb. Come, <u>happy</u> father of Zenocrate, A title <u>higher</u> than thy Soldan's name. Though my right hand have thus <u>enthralled</u> thee,	= fortunate. = of greater value. = enslaved.

452 Thy princely daughter here shall set thee free;
She that hath calmed the fury of my sword,
454 Which had ere this been bathed in streams of blood
As vast and deep as Euphrates or Nile.

456 **Zeno.** O sight thrice-welcome to my joyful soul,
458 To see the king, my father, issue safe
From dangerous battle of my conquering love!

460 **Sold.** Well met, my only dear Zenocrate,
462 Though with the loss of Egypt and my crown.

464 **Tamb.** 'Twas I, my lord, that got the victory,
And therefore grieve not at your overthrow,
466 Since I shall render all into your hands,
And add more strength to your dominions
468 Than ever yet confirmed th' Egyptian crown.
The god of war resigns his room to me,
470 Meaning to make me general of the world:
Jove, viewing me in arms, looks pale and wan,
472 Fearing my power should pull him from his throne.

Where'er I come the Fatal Sisters sweat,

474 And grisly Death, by running to and fro,
To do their ceaseless homage to my sword;
476 And here in Afric, where it seldom rains,
Since I arrived with my triumphant host,
478 Have swelling clouds, drawn from wide-gasping wounds,
Been oft resolved in bloody purple showers,

480 A meteor that might terrify the earth,

And make it quake at every drop it drinks.

482 Millions of souls sit on the banks of Styx
Waiting the back return of Charon's boat;

484 Hell and Elysium swarm with ghosts of men,
That I have sent from sundry foughten fields,
486 To spread my fame through hell and up to Heaven. –
And see, my lord, a sight of strange import,
488 Emperors and kings lie breathless at my feet:
The Turk and his great Empress, as it seems,
490 Left to themselves while we were at the fight,
Have desperately despatched their slavish lives:
492 With them Arabia, too, hath left his life:

= earlier.

= **Euphrates** is stressed on its first syllable: *EU-phra-tes*.

= come out.

= with.

= ie. established firmly.¹⁴

= office, position.¹

= ie. from fear.

472: ie. just as Jove pulled his own father down from his position as king of the gods.

473: the three **Fates** (*the Fatal Sisters*), the sibling-goddesses who measure out the length of, and eventually terminate, each person's life, **sweat** because they are forced to work overtime when Tamburlaine appears.

= Tamburlaine again uses **Afric** to mean the Levant.

478-9: Tamburlaine's army has spilled so much blood that, like water, it has evaporated, forming storm-clouds that then rain the blood back down to earth (Wolff, p. 248).¹³

resolved = dissolved.

480: **meteor** could be used to describe meteorological phenomena in general; here **meteor** refers to the rain of blood.¹⁵

= ie. every drop of blood that seeps into the earth (*it*).

482-3: another reference to the ferryman of the underworld. The image is of a shore crowded with the multitude of souls Tamburlaine sends down in a short period of time, backing up Charon's workload.

= Marlowe poetically divides Hades into two components, **Hell** for the damned and **Elysium** for the blessed.

= fields which have been fought on, ie. battlefields.

= unusual or great importance or significance.¹

= ie. dead.

494	All sights of power to grace my victory; And such are <u>objects</u> fit for Tamburlaine; Wherein, as in a mirror, may be seen	= ie. things to see, spectacles.
496	His honour, that consists in shedding blood, When men presume to <u>manage arms</u> with him.	= conduct war.
498		
500	Sold. Mighty hath God and Mahomet made thy hand, Renowmèd Tamburlaine! to whom all kings <u>Of force</u> must yield their crowns and emperies;	= of necessity, without choice.
502	And I am pleased with this my overthrow, If, as beseems a person of thy state,	
504	Thou hast with honour <u>used</u> Zenocrate.	= treated.
506	Tamb. Her state and person <u>wants</u> no pomp, you see; And <u>for</u> all blot of foul in chastity	= lack. 507-8: Zenocrate has suffered no sexual predation. <i>for</i> = "as for" ¹² or "from". ¹⁴
508	<u>I record Heaven</u> her heavenly self is clear:	<i>I record Heaven</i> = "I call on Heaven to witness". ⁵
	Then let me find <u>no farther time</u> to grace Her princely temples with the Persian crown. But here these kings that on my fortunes wait, And have been crowned for <u>provèd</u> worthiness, Even by this hand that shall establish them, Shall now, <u>adjoining</u> all their hands with mine, Invest her here the Queen of Persiä. – What saith the noble Soldan and Zenocrate!	= "no more distant time". ⁵
510		
512		= ie. proven.
514		= ie. joining.
516		
518	Sold. I yield with thanks and <u>protestatiöns</u> Of endless honour to thee <u>for her love</u> .	= professions. = ie. "for your love of Zenocrate."
520		
522	Tamb. Then doubt I not but fair Zenocrate Will soon consent to satisfy us both.	
524	Zeno. Else should I much forget myself, my lord.	
526	Ther. Then let us set the crown upon her head, That long hath lingered for so high a seat.	
528		
530	Tech. My hand is ready to perform the deed; For now her marriage-time shall work us rest.	530: ie. "a little honeymoon-time will give us a breather from incessant warring."
532	Usum. And here's the crown, my lord; help set it on.	
534	Tamb. Then sit thou down, divine Zenocrate; And here we crown thee Queen of Persiä, And all the kingdoms and dominiöns That late the power of Tamburlaine subdued.	
536		
538	<u>As Juno</u> , when the giants were suppressed, That <u>darted</u> mountains at her brother Jove,	538: <i>As Juno</i> = "the same way Juno looked". 538-9: another reference to the <i>Battle of the Giants</i> (see the note at Act II.vi.1-4). The point here is that the victory over the Giants firmly established Jove's mastery of the universe, and permitted him to confirm Juno, his sister and wife, to be the Queen of the same. <i>darted</i> = threw.
540	So looks my love, <u>shadowing</u> in her brows	= harbouring ¹⁴ or portraying. ¹⁵ Marlowe used a similar collocation of <i>shadowing beauty in one's brows</i> in <i>Doctor</i>

Triumphs and trophies for my victories;
 542 Or, as Latona's daughter, bent to arms,
 Adding more courage to my conquering mind.
 544 To gratify the sweet Zenocrate,
 Egyptians, Moors, and men of Asiä,
 546 From Barbary unto the western Indie,
 Shall pay a yearly tribute to thy sire:

548 And from the bounds of Afric to the banks
 Of Ganges shall his mighty arm extend.

550 And now, my lords and loving followers,
 That purchased kingdoms by your martial deeds,
 552 Cast off your armour, put on scarlet robes,
 Mount up your royal places of estate,
 554 Environèd with troops of noblemen,
 And there make laws to rule your provinces.
 556 Hang up your weapons on Alcides' post,

For Tamburlaine takes truce with all the world.
 558 Thy first-betrothèd love, Arabia,
 Shall we with honour, as beseems, entomb
 560 With this great Turk and his fair Emperess.
 Then, after all these solemn exequies,

562 We will our celebrated rites of marriage solemnise.

564 *Finis Actus quinti & vltimi huius primae partis.*

Faustus, and the meaning of the expression remains as uncertain in that play as it is here.

542: Zenocrate also reminds Tamburlaine of Diana, goddess of the hunt, the *daughter* of *Latona*.

= ie. to India, as far as the Ganges River.

= father.

548-9: Tamburlaine seems to be giving the Soldan a vice-royalty, or at least tributary rights, to lands from Syria to India, which would thus include most of the land conquered by Tamburlaine to date. The farthest east the real Tamburlaine's empire covered probably touched the western reaches of the Ganges River.

550-1: Techelles, Usumcasane and Theridamas, we remember, won (*purchased*) kingdoms of their own in northern Africa.

553: "take up your positions or conditions as kings".

= surrounded; *Environèd* should be pronounced with four syllables here: *En-VIR-on-ed*.

= *Alcides* is an alternate name for Hercules; Ribner identifies *Alcides' post* as the door post of the Temple of Hercules (p. 111).⁹

= is fitting.

= funeral rites.¹

562: the play concludes with an extra-lengthy line, and probably a rhyming couplet (*exequies* and *solemnise* likely rhymed in Elizabethan pronunciation).

564: "the end of the fifth and last Act of this first part."¹⁴

POSTSCRIPT: read the further adventures of Tamburlaine and Zenocrate in Christopher Marlowe's *Tamburlaine, Part Two!*

Marlowe's Invented Words.

Like all writers of the era, Christopher Marlowe made up words when he felt like it, usually by adding prefixes and suffixes to known words, combining words, or using a word in a way not yet used before. The following is a list of words and phrases that research suggests first appeared in *Tamburlaine, Part One*:

A. Words and Compound Words.

aspect (meaning countenance, unconfirmed)
astounding (as an adjective)
attemptless
basso-master
blood-raw
bristle-pointed
celebrated (as an adjective describing, e.g. a festival, rather than a person)
clownage
countermand (meaning control, unconfirmed)
encountering (as an adjective, unconfirmed)
enroll (meaning to wrap up in, unconfirmed)
ever-howling
excruciate (meaning to torture mentally)
expressless
fetch (meaning to take a course, unconfirmed)
fiery-spangled
fifty-headed
first-betrothed (as an adjective)
inchastity (though "unchastity" was old)
investor
jigging
judge (meaning allow judgment to be made about, unconfirmed)
lustless (meaning without sexual urges)
marshal (meaning to lead or usher, unconfirmed)
mother wit (referring to a person who possesses mother wit)
mountain-foot
never-stayed
novel (meaning newly-acquired, unconfirmed)
obdurate (meaning hard-hearted or obstinate, unconfirmed)
overmatching (as an adjective)
overweighing (as an adjective)
parbreak (as a noun)
period (meaning goal or point, unconfirmed)
reflex (meaning to cast, as a beam of light)
regreet (meaning to greet again)
resistless
retorqued
royalize (meaning make famous) (1589)
sled (meaning a sleigh, pulling people for recreation, unconfirmed)
smothering (meaning covering completely, unconfirmed)
spangled (meaning speckled, unconfirmed)
top (as a verb, meaning to surpass or outdo, unconfirmed)
triple-worthy confirmed
Turkess (meaning a female Turk)

unaffrighted
unvalued
vagrant (adjective, applied to things as opposed to people)
valurous
villainess

B. Expressions and Collocations.

Collocations are words that are commonly, conventionally and familiarly used together (e.g. "blue sky"), but which when used collectively so do not rise to the level of what may be called an expression. All of the following expressions and collocations make their first appearance in *Tamburlaine, Part One*, and were subsequently used by later writers, and some even continue to be used this day.

Those collocations in *quotation marks* indicate an exactly worded formula that was reused regularly by later writers. Also, the words *one*, *one's*, and *oneself* are used as proxies for any pronoun, e.g. the entry "pull one's house down" represents all variations including "pull my house down", "pull your house down", etc.

"a sudden pinch"
"accomplish one's behest"
"amber hair"
"amity and life"
"ask a parley"
"baneful to one's soul"
"base villain"
"baseness and obscurity" or "obscurity and baseness"
"basest drudgery"
"Bay of Portingale"
"be the footstool"
"bent to arms"
"blind geographer(s)"
"bloody and insatiate"
"bodies strow the field"
"brave and rich"
"characters (en)graven"
"chill and cold"
"Cimmerian clouds"
"circumcised Turk(s)"
"city, liberty and lives"
"confusion light on / upon"
"conquering sword(s)"
"countervail the stars"
"cruel brothers"
"cureless grief(s)"
"dainty show"
"damned train"
"darksome vaults"
"deadly servitude"
"deep affections"
"disordered troops"
"dispatch the life of"
"distempred spirits"

"distressed plight"
 "dreadful siege"
 "drizzling drops"
 "eagles soar"
 "ebon(y) sceptres"
 "effeminate and faint"
 "embossed with silk"
 "excess of strength"
 "face and personage"
 "fading mist(s)"
 "far from any man"
 "fell and stout"
 "filthy bones" (1587)
 "fixed upon the earth"
 "flesh quakes"
 "flight to hell"
 "flowery banks (of a river)"
 "folded furrow(s)"
 "forage up and down"
 "friendly truce"
 "gasping for life"
 "gasping wound(s)"
 "gentle beams" (1589)
 "gentle victory"
 "glid(ing) through the bowels of"
 "goodly refreshing"
 "gracious stars"
 "great and puissant monarch"
 "hair dishevelled"
 "hallowed person"
 "hand of fame"
 "hellish poison"
 "Hermes" described as "prolocutor to the gods"
 "hideous revenge"
 "highest thoughts"
 "holy Alcoran" (1588)
 "humble moans"
 "I record Heaven"
 "idle heat"
 "ignominious wrong"
 "immortal flowers"
 "imperious eye(s)"
 "imperious yoke(s)"
 "Indian continent"
 "injurious villain(s)"
 "intended drifts"
 "ivory pen"
 "keeping his circuit" (1587)
 "killing frown"
 "kingly head"
 "kingly resolution"
 "knowledge infinite"
 "last and cruelest"
 "Latona's daughter"

"lawless rapine"
 "lawless spoil"
 "leading a troop of"
 "lightsome heaven(s)"
 "liquid air"
 "loathed sight"
 "lofty cedar" / "lofty cedar trees"
 "lofty clift"
 "malice of one's stars"
 "march courageously"
 "martial face"
 "martial spoil"
 "mellowed fruit"
 "menacing revenge"
 "monstrous slave"
 "Moorish fens"
 "morning's pride"
 "mould or mettle"
 "mournful streamer(s)"
 "naked action"
 "noble and mild"
 "nook(s) of hell"
 "obdurate breast(s)"
 "odds too great"
 "pale of complexion"
 "partial praise(s)" (1589)
 "plumed helm(s)"
 "princely lenity"
 "privy to the state"
 "proportioned like a / the man"
 "prostrate service"
 "purple shower(s)"
 "rebellious wind(s)"
 "resistless power(s)"
 "rest a space" (1587)
 "restless spheres"
 "roofs of gold"
 "rouse one out of" a location
 "rusty coach"
 "scald knave(s)"
 "scatter and consume"
 "scourge and terror"
 "scum of men"
 "shameless girl" (1588)
 "shepherd's flame(s)"
 "shining lamps" (1587)
 "silly country swain(s)"
 "silver tresses"
 "simple hole"
 "sitting in scarlet"
 "skull" split in "twain"
 "slaughtered carcasses"
 "smiling stars"
 "speak but three wise words"

"start a foot"
 "stragging runagate(s)"
 "stuffed with treasure"
 "sudden and hot"
 "sundry foughten field(s)"
 "sweet accident(s)"
 "swelling cloud(s)"
 "terror to the world"
 "the love of Jove"
 "the passage and the port"
 "the pride of Christendom"
 "the stroke of war"
 "the substance of one's child"
 "the sum of glory"
 "thorny wood"
 "threefold army"
 "thundering hooves"
 "torrid zone" (previously referred to as *torrida zona*)
 "tragic (tragical) glass"
 "treacherous and false"
 "triple region" (of the air)
 "turns of war"
 "ugly ferryman"
 "uncouth pain"
 "unquiet fit(s)"
 "unspotted maid(s)" (1590)
 "utmost virtue"
 "vast and deep"
 "warrant of one's death"
 "warring with a"
 "wondrous man"
 "wondrous year" and "Plato's wondrous year"
 a "month's victuals"
 collocation of **Gihon** and **golden**
 describing "Aurora" as "peeping"
 describing "fortune" as being on one's "forehead"
 describing a "bullet" as "dipped" in something
 describing a sword as **enamelled**
 "horse incontinent"
 the "blot" of "inchastity"
 the "circle of one's arms"
 the "fount" of "honour"
 to "appal one's thoughts"
 to "applaud" one's "fortune"
 to "bid one battle straight"
 to "calm the fury of"
 to "clear" the "darkened sky"
 to "dart mountains"
 to "feed upon one's soul"
 to "glut one's sword(s)"
 to "grace one's bed"
 to "grace one's calling"
 to "lanch" one's "throat"
 to "live and die one's slave"

to **"make the welkin crack"** and variants, such as *howl, roar*, etc.
to **"marshal" the "way"** (1589)
to **"melt" one's "fury"**
to **"menace Heaven"**
to **"quiver" like a "leaf"**
to **"rear one's standard"**
to **"ride in triumph"**
to **"slice" the "flesh"**
(also to **"slice" and "cut" one's "flesh"**)
to **"spread one's colours"**
to **"stain one's altars"**
to be **"deeply read"**
to lie **"breathless at one's feet"**
to suffer **"consumption" from "fretting"**

Some of the entries above are paired with a year. In these cases, the entry technically appeared in print before *Tamburlaine* did in 1590 (the year shown is the year the entry appeared). However, it is very possible that the entry was in fact invented by Marlowe, since he wrote the play in about 1586.

III. Words and Expressions Incorrectly Credited to Marlowe by the OED.

The OED cites *Tamburlaine, Part One*, as being the publication containing the earliest use of the following words; however, research has shown that the OED is not correct in giving Marlowe credit for using these words first, ie. all of them appeared in works published before 1586, the earliest likely year *Tamburlaine* was written:

architecture of (used figuratively to mean structure)
Caspian (referring to the Caspian Sea)
ceaseless
fleshless
investion
piling (as an adjective, meaning pillaging)
scum (applied to persons)
semi-circled
the phrase **ocean main**
the phrase **place of estate**
the phrase **rue the day**
the phrase **to manage arms**

FOOTNOTES.

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